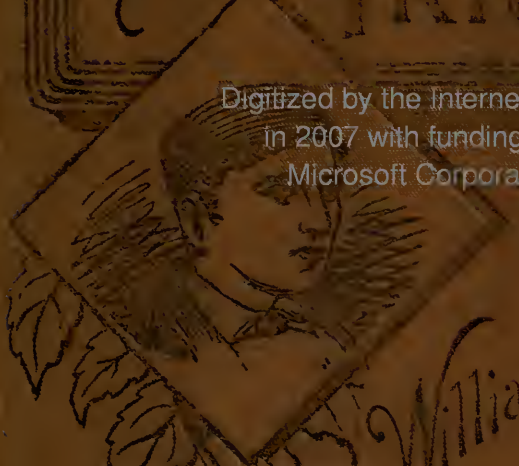
Budd Boyd's Triumph



William P. Chipman

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BUDD BOYD'S TRIUMPH;

—OR,—

THE BOY-FIRM OF FOX ISLAND.

BY WILLIAM PENDLETON CHIPMAN,

Author of

"Roy Gilbert's Search," "The Mill-Boy of the Genesee," "The Black-Forge Mills," etc., etc.

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BUDD BOYD'S TRIUMPH.

CHAPTER I.

BUDD SEEKS EMPLOYMENT.

IT WAS a raw, cold, day in the month of March. Since early morning the clouds had been gathering, and they now hung dark and heavy over both land and sea. The wind, too, which had for hours been steadily increasing in violence, now blew little short of a gale. It evidently was going to be a terrible night, and that night was near at hand.

No one realized this more than the young lad, who, with a small bundle in one hand and a stout staff in the other, was walking rapidly along the highway that runs near the west shore of Narragansett Bay. He was a lad that would have attracted attention anywhere. Tall for his age, which could not have been far from sixteen years, he was also of good proportions, and walked with an ease and stride which suggested reserved strength and muscular development.

But it was the lad's face that was the most noticeable. Frank, open, of singular beauty in feature and outline, there were also upon it unmistakable evidences of intelligence, resoluteness, and honesty of

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purpose. A close observer might also have detected traces of suffering or of sorrow on it—possibly of some great burden hard to bear.

The lad was none too warmly clad for the chilly air and piercing wind, and now and then drew his light overcoat about him as though even his rapid walking did not make him entirely comfortable. He also looked eagerly ahead, like one who was watching for some signs of his destination. He drew a sigh of relief as he reached the foot of a steep hill, and said aloud:

"I must be near the place, now. They said it was at the top of the first long hill I came to, and this must be the hill."

As he spoke he quickened his pace to a run, and soon reached the summit, quite out of breath, but with a genial warmth in his body that he had not experienced for some hours.

Pausing now a moment to catch his breath, he looked about him. Dim as was the light of the fast-falling evening, he could not help giving an exclamation of delight at the vision he beheld. To the north and west of him he saw the twinkling lights of several villages through which he had already passed. To the east of him was the bay, its tossing waves capped with white, its islands like so many dark gems on the bosom of the angry waters. To the south there was first a stretch of land, and then the broad expanse of the well-nigh boundless ocean.

"It must be a beautiful place to live, and I hope

to find a home here," he remarked, as he resumed his journey.

A few rods farther on he came to a farm-house, and turned up to its nearest door. As he was about to knock, a man came from the barn-yard, a little distance away, and accosted him:

"Good-evening!"

"Good-evening!" responded the lad.

Then he asked:

"Is this Mr. Benton?"

"No; I'm Mr. Wright," answered the man, pleasantly. "Benton lives on the next farm. You will have to turn into the next gateway and go down the lane, as his house stands some distance from the road."

"I was told," explained the lad, "that he wished to hire help, and I hoped to get work there. Could you tell me what the prospect is?"

The man had now reached the boy's side, and was looking him over with evident curiosity.

"Well," he replied, slowly, "I think he wants to get a young fellow for the coming season, and hadn't hired anyone the last I knew. But I guess you must be a stranger in these parts."

"Yes," the lad answered, briefly; and then thanking the man for his information he turned away.

"I thought so," the man called after him, "else you wouldn't want to go there to work."

The boy scarcely gave heed to the remark then; but it was not long before he knew by hard experience the meaning of it.

A quarter of a mile farther on he reached a gate,

and passing through it, he hastened down the narrow lane till he came to a long, low, dilapidated house; but in the darkness, which had by this time fallen, he was not able to form any definite idea of his surroundings.

A feeble light came forth from a back window, and guided by this, he found the rear door of the building. To his knock there was a chorus of responses. Dogs barked, children screamed, and above the din a gruff voice shouted:

"Come in!"

A little disconcerted by the unusual sounds, the lad, instead of obeying the invitation, knocked again. Then there was a heavy step across the floor, the door swung open with a jerk, and a tall, raw-boned man, shaggy-bearded and shock-haired, stood on the threshold.

Eying the lad for a moment in surprise, he asked, somewhat surlily:

"What do you want, youngster?"

"Are you Mr. Benton?" the lad asked.

"Yes; what of it?" the man answered, sharply.

"I was told you wanted help, and I have called to see about it," explained the boy.

"Come in, then," said the man, and his tones were wonderfully modified.

The lad now obeyed, and found himself in a large room, evidently the kitchen and living-room all in one. There was no carpet on the floor, and a stove, a table and a half-dozen chairs constituted its furniture.

Two large dogs lay before the fire, growling sullenly. A woman and four small children were seated at the table. An empty chair and an unemptied plate showed that Mr. Benton had been eating when he was called to the door.

There was food enough upon the table, but its disorderly arrangement, and the hap-hazard way in which each child was helping itself, caused the lad to give an involuntary shudder as his host invited him to sit down "an' take a bite while they talked over business together."

Mr. Benton evidently meant to give his caller a most flattering impression of his hospitality, for he heaped the lad's plate with cold pork, brown bread, and vegetables, and even called on his wife to get some of that "apple sass" for the young stranger.

The boy was hungry, and the food was, after all, wholesome, and he stowed away a quantity that surprised himself, if not his host. When supper was eaten, Mr. Benton pushed back his chair and abruptly asked his guest:

"Who are ye?"

"Budd Boyd," promptly answered the lad.

"That's a kinder cur'us name, now ain't it?" questioned Mr. Benton. "I dunno any Boyds round here. Where be ye from?"

"I came from Massachusetts," replied Budd, with the air of one who had studied his answer; but it seemed for some reason to be very satisfactory to his questioner.

"Any parents?" next inquired Mr. Benton.

"My mother is dead, and my father is not keeping house now. I'm to look out for myself," said the lad, somewhat hesitatingly.

"I guess ye ain't used to farm work, be ye?" now inquired Mr. Benton, doubtingly, and looking at Budd's hands, which were as white and soft as a lady's.

"No, sir; but I'm willing to learn," said the lad.

"Of course ye can't expect much in the way of wages," remarked Mr. Benton, cautiously.

"No, not until I can do my full share of work," said Budd, indifferently.

A light gleamed for a moment in Mr. Benton's eyes.

"I might give ye ten dollars a month an' board, beginnin' the fust of the month, ye to work round for yer board till then," he ventured.

"Very well," responded the lad; and immediately after he added:

"I've walked a good ways to-day, and if you don't mind, I'll go to my room."

"Purhaps we'd better draw up a paper of agreement, an' both of us sign it," suggested Mr. Benton, rubbing his hands vigorously together, as though well pleased with himself and everybody else.

"All right, if that is your custom," said Budd. "Draw up the paper, and I'll sign it."

After considerable effort, Mr. Benton produced the following document:

On this 20 day of March Budd Boyd, a miner of Mass., agres to work for me, John Benton. He's to

begin work April fust, an' work 6 munths, at 10 dollers an' bord. He's to work til the fust for his bord. If he quits work before his time is up he's to have no pay. To this I agree.

JOHN BENTON, on his part.

Budd read the paper, and could scarcely suppress a smile as he signed his name under Mr. Benton's, and in imitation of him, added the words "on his part" after the signature. He knew, however much importance Mr. Benton might attach to it, that as a legal document it had no special force. He simply set the whole act down as one of the whims of his employer, and gave no more thought to the matter. But it was destined to serve that gentleman's purpose, nevertheless, until taken forcibly from him.

Mr. Benton now showed Budd up to a back room on the second floor, and telling him that he would call him early in the morning, bade him good-night.

The room the lad had entered was bare and cold. A single chair, a narrow bedstead, a rude rack on the wall to hang his garments upon, were all it contained. Yet it was evidently with some satisfaction that the lad opened his bundle, hung up the few clothes it held, and prepared for bed. As he drew the quilts over himself he murmured:

"I don't think I ever had more uncomfortable quarters in my life, and the outlook for the next six months, at least, is far from encouraging. Still, I would not go back to what I have left behind for anything."

He was tired. The rain that was now falling heavily upon the roof just over his head acted as a sedative and lulled him to sleep. But his was not an unbroken rest, for at times he tossed to and fro, and muttered strange sentences. One was, "Father never did it; how could they treat him so?" Another, "I can never face them again; no, never!" Still another, "Thank Heaven, mother never lived to know the worst!" After that the troubled sleeper must have had pleasanter dreams, for he murmured the words, "Mother; father; a home at last!" From these, however, he was rudely awakened by a gruff call:

"Budd! Budd! get up and come out to the barn."

Dazed, bewildered, he arose, and groped about in the darkness for his clothing. By the time he was dressed a full consciousness of his situation had come back to him, and with a stout heart he went out, to begin what was to him equally new duties and a new life.

CHAPTER II.

A SLIGHT MISUNDERSTANDING.

IT WAS still dark, and the rain fell in torrents as Budd opened the kitchen door and ran hastily out to the barn, where Mrs. Benton, who was making preparations for breakfast, had told him he would find her husband. He noticed the kitchen time-piece as he passed through the room, and knew it was not yet four o'clock. Early rising was evidently one of the things to be expected in his new home.

Reaching the barn quite drenched, Budd found Mr. Benton engaged in feeding a dozen or more gaunt and ill-kept cows, who seized the musty hay thrown down to them with an avidity that suggested, on their part, a scarcity of rations. The same untidiness that marked the house was to be seen about the barn also, which, if anything, was in a more dilapidated condition than the former.

"Good-morning, Mr. Benton. What can I do to assist you?" asked Budd, pleasantly, as soon as he entered the barn.

"Hum! I don't suppose ye can milk?" was the rather ungracious response.

"No, sir; but I'm willing to learn," replied Budd, good-naturedly.

"Well, I'll see 'bout that after awhile. I suppose ye might as well begin now as any time. But fust git up on that mow an' throw down more hay. These pesky critters eat more'n their necks are wuth," said Mr. Benton, kicking savagely at a cow that was reaching out for the wad of hay he was carrying by her.

Budd obeyed with alacrity; and when that job was finished it was followed by others, including the milking, wherein the lad proved an apt scholar, until nearly six o'clock, when Mrs. Benton's shrill voice summoned them to breakfast. That meal, possibly on account of Budd's want of the good appetite he had had the night before, seemed to him greatly inferior to his supper. The coffee was bitter and sweetned with molasses, the johnny-cakes were burnt, and the meat and vegetables were cold. He did his best to eat heartily of the unsavory food, however—partly that he might not seem to his employer over-fastidious in taste, and partly because the morning's work had taught him that he should need all the strength he could obtain ere his day's task was over. Stormy though it was, he felt sure Mr. Benton would find enough for him to do.

In fact, long before the first of April came, Budd realized fully the force of the words Mr. Wright had shouted after him the night he stopped there to inquire the way to Mr. Benton's. Had he really known his employer and family, he certainly would

not have been over-anxious to have hired out to him for the season; for the dilapidated condition of the buildings and the untidiness and disorder that marked everything about the place were not, after all, the worst features with which Budd had to deal. He soon found that his employer was a hard, cruel, grasping tyrant, while his wife was a complete termagant, scolding and fault-finding incessantly from morning until night. There was not an animal on the place that escaped the abuse of the master, and not even the master himself escaped the tirades of the mistress.

Budd, by faithfully performing every task assigned him, and thus frequently doing twice over what a lad of his age should have been expected to do, tried to win the approval of both Mr. Benton and his wife. He soon found this impossible, and so contented himself with doing what he felt to be right, and cheerfully bore the scoldings that soon became an hourly occurrence.

It was indeed astonishing with what good nature the lad bore both the work and the abuse put upon him. Mr. Benton attributed it to the paper he had asked the boy to sign, and chuckled to himself at the thought that Budd's fear of losing his wages kept him so industrious and docile. He confidentially admitted to his wife, one day, that the lad was worth twice what he had agreed to pay him; "only I ain't paid him nothin' as yit," he added, with a knowing look, which his wife seemed to understand, for she replied:

"Now ye are up to another of yer capers, John Benton. There never was a man on the earth meaner than ye are!"

But Mr. Wright, who knew his neighbors well, could in no way account for the lad's willingness to endure what he knew he must be enduring, and finally his curiosity got the better of him; for, meeting Budd one day as he was returning from the nearest village, he drew up his horses and said:

"Budd, do you know you are the profoundest example of human patience I ever saw?"

"No; is that so?" replied Budd, with a laugh. "What makes you think so?"

"Well," remarked Mr. Wright, leaning on his wagon-seat and looking down into the smiling countenance before him, "I have lived here beside John Benton and his wife ten years, and know them well enough to be sure that an angel direct from Heaven couldn't long stand their abuse; and yet you have actually been there four weeks, and are still as cheerful as a lark on one of these beautiful spring mornings. Will you just explain to me how you manage to stand it?"

While he was speaking a far-away look had come into the lad's eyes, and a shudder shook his robust frame as though he saw something very disagreeable to himself; but he answered, quietly enough:

"Mr. Wright, there are some things in this world harder to bear than either work or abuse, and I prefer even to live with John Benton's family than to go back to the life I have left behind me."

With these words Budd started up his oxen and went on, leaving Mr. Wright to resume his journey more mystified than ever.

On the first day of May Budd asked Mr. Benton for the previous month's pay.

They were at work putting in corn, and the lad's request took his employer so by surprise that his hoe-handle dropped from his grasp.

"Me pay ye now!" he exclaimed. "What are ye thinkin' of?"

Then, as though another idea had come to his mind, he said, persuasively:

"Ye don't need no money, an' 'twill be better to have yer pay all in a bunch. Jes' think how much 'twill be—sixty dollers, an' all yer own."

"But I have a special use for the money," persisted Budd; "and as I have earned it, I should think you might give it to me."

He spoke all the more emphatically because he knew that Mr. Benton had quite a sum of money by him, and that he could easily pay him if he chose to do so.

For reply, Mr. Benton put his hand into his pocket, and taking out his wallet, opened it. From it he then took the paper of agreement that Budd and he had signed. This he slowly spelled out, and when he had finished, asked:

"Does this here paper say anythin' 'bout my payin' ye every munth?"

"No, sir," Budd reluctantly admitted.

"But it does say, if ye quit yer work 'fore yer

time is up ye are to have no pay, doesn't it?" inquired the man, significantly.

"Yes, sir," the lad replied, now realizing how mean and contemptible his employer was, and what had been his real object in drawing up that paper.

"Well, how can I know ye are goin' to stay with me yer whole time till it's up?" he asked, with a show of triumph in his tones.

"Do you mean to say you don't intend to pay me anything until October?" asked Budd, indignantly.

"That's the agreement," replied Mr. Benton, coolly, returning the paper to his wallet and placing it in his pocket. "If ye'll keep yer part, I'll keep mine."

He now picked up his hoe and resumed his work.

For the first time since he came to the farm Budd felt an impulse to leave his employer. It was with great difficulty indeed that he refrained from throwing down his hoe, going to the house after his few effects, and quitting the place forever. But he did, and went resolutely on with his work. Fortunate for him was it, though he did not know it then, that he did so. Later on, he could see that the ruling of his spirit that day won for him, if not a city, certainly the happiest results, though severe trials stood between him and their consummation.

That night, at as early an hour as possible, Budd sought his little room. Closing the door carefully after him, he walked over to the rude rack on the wall and took down his light overcoat. From an inside pocket he took a long wallet, and from the

wallet a postal card. Addressing it with a pencil to "N. B. Johnson, Esq., No. 127 Sumner Street, Boston, Mass.," he wrote rapidly and in tiniest characters, on the reverse side, without giving place or date, the following words:

DEAR SIR:—I promised you last March to send you some money each month until the total amount remaining due to you was paid. I have secured work at a small compensation, but find, through a misunderstanding with my employer, that I am not to have my pay until the six months for which I have hired out are ended. At that time you may expect a remittance from me. I am very sorry to make this change in my original plans, but cannot help it, and trust you will be satisfied with this arrangement. Truly yours,

BUDD BOYD.

It was several days later, however, before Budd had an opportunity to go up to the neighboring village. When he did go, he took care not to drop the postal into the post-office, but handed it directly to a mail agent upon a passing train. His reason for this act could not be easily misunderstood. Evidently he did not care that the Mr. Johnson to whom he had written should know his exact whereabouts. But his precaution was unnecessary, for before the summer months had fairly come he was to see Mr. Johnson under circumstances most trying to himself.

CHAPTER III.

AGAINST WIND AND TIDE.

NOT A GREAT distance north of the farm of Mr. Benton, and stretching some distance along the shore of the bay, there is a singular formation of sand and rocks known as "The Hummocks." A small cove lies south and west of the formation, while the main bay stretches out to its widest extent from the east. The only point, then, where "The Hummocks" touch the main-land is at the north; and even this point of contact is so narrow as to simply furnish a roadway down onto "The Hummocks" themselves.

Of these hummocks, for there are but two, the northern one is much the smaller, embracing perhaps an acre of rough soil, covered with a stunted grass, and dotted here and there with red cedars. The southern one, on the other hand, covered like its smaller mate with a scanty vegetation and scattered trees, broadens out so as to nearly land-lock the cove behind it, and causes its waters to rush in or out, according to the tide, through an exceedingly contracted passage-way at its extreme southern end, popularly called "the narrows." The point of contact of the southern with the northern hummock,

like the northern hummock with the main-land, is also very narrow; and to its narrowness is added another feature: it is so low, or in more technical language it is so nearly on a level with the high-water mark, that when there happens to be a strong wind from either the northeast or the southeast, the waters of the bay, on the incoming tide, will rush with great force over the slight barrier and mingle with the waters of the cove, making an island, for the time, of the larger and more southern hummock.

Perhaps half or three-quarters of a mile off shore, and a little to the northeast of these hummocks, there is an island of an irregular shape, and a few acres in extent, that bears the name of Fox Island. The name has belonged to it since Colonial days, but the reason therefor is unknown, unless at some remote period some solitary animal of that specific genus which gives the island its title may have there made its home.

This island had in later years, however, a more illustrious if not less solitary inhabitant. A gentleman of some means, tired of society, or for some reason at enmity with it, crossed over from the main-land, erected a small house, dug a well, set out trees, planted a garden, and built a wharf—in fact set up thereon a complete habitation. Not long, however, did he endure his self-imposed solitude. Scarcely were his arrangements completed when an unfortunate accident caused his death, and the island and its improvements were left to be the

home of the sea-fowls or the temporary abode of some passing fisherman.

This extended description has been given here because it is essential that the reader should form some definite idea of the island and its relation to "The Hummocks," for on and about them no small portion of our young hero's summer was destined to be spent.

Mr. Benton owned what is termed "a shore privilege" on the lower half of the southern hummock, and the peculiar situation of that rocky formation to the bay made it a valuable one, for heavy winds from any eastern or southern quarter brought onto the beach there immense quantities of sea-weed, so highly prized by the farmer as a fertilizer.

During the fall and winter months previous to Budd's coming to the farm, owing to the repeated storms there had been landed on "The Hummocks" so large and unusual an amount of this weed that Mr. Benton had contented himself with simply gathering it into a huge pile on the summit thereof, above high-water mark, intending to remove it to the farm in the spring. So it fell to Budd's lot to cart from the heap to the farm as the weed was needed, and one day near the middle of May found him engaged in this work.

It was a cloudy, threatening day. The wind was from the southeast, and blew with a freshness that promised a severe storm before the day was over. Perhaps it was on this account that Mr. Benton had directed the lad to engage in this particular work.

He was himself obliged to be off on business, and this was a job at which Budd could work alone, and the weather was hardly propitious for any other undertaking. So immediately after breakfast Budd yoked the oxen to the cart and started for his first load.

"There ain't over four loads more down there, an' if ye work spry ye can git it all up by nite," Mr. Benton shouted after him as he drove off.

The distance to "The Hummocks" from the farm was such that with the slow-walking oxen one load for each half-day had been regarded as a sufficient task. But Budd knew he had an early start, and he determined to do his best to bring all the weed home that day. He therefore quickened the pace of the oxen, and before nine o'clock had made his first return to the farm. Unloading with haste, he immediately started back for his second load. When he crossed from the north to the south hummock he noticed the incoming tide was nearly across the roadway, but thought little of it.

On examining the heap of weed, he became convinced that by loading heavily he could carry what remained at two loads. He therefore pitched away until in his judgment half of the heap was upon his cart. It made a tremendous load; but the oxen were stout, and bending their necks to the yoke, they at Budd's command started slowly off.

As he approached the narrow passage-way he noticed the tide had gained rapidly, and was now sweeping over it with considerable force and depth.

Jumping upon the tongue of the cart, he urged his oxen through the tossing waves. To his consternation the water came well up around the oxen's backs, and had he not quickly scrambled to the top of his load he would have got thoroughly drenched.

The cattle, however, raised their noses as high as possible and plunged bravely through the flood, and soon emerged on the other side with their load unharmed. The rest of the journey home was made without difficulty, and Budd at dinner-time had the satisfaction of knowing that two-thirds of his appointed work was already accomplished.

Mr. Benton had not yet arrived home, and hurrying through dinner, the lad hastened off for his third and last load, hoping to get back to the farm with it before his employer came. Hardly had he started, however, when it began to rain, and as he passed down onto the first hummock the wind was blowing with a velocity that made it almost impossible for the oxen to stand before it.

Slowly, however, the passage across the first hummock was made, and Budd approached the narrow roadway leading to the other; then he stopped the oxen in sheer amazement. In front of him was a strip of surging and tossing water of uncertain depth, and he instinctively felt that there was a grave risk in attempting to push through to the other side. But he was anxious to secure his load. He had passed through safely enough before, and he resolved to attempt the crossing now, counting on nothing worse than a severe drenching.

This was a grave mistake, and Budd would have realized it had he only stopped to think that there was quite a difference between his situation now and when he had made his successful crossing before dinner. Then he had a loaded cart, the wind and tide were both in his favor, and the water had not reached either its present depth or expanse. Now his cart was empty, a significant and important fact; the wind was blowing with greater force and directly against him; while the tide, as he would have seen had he watched it closely, had now turned, and was rushing back from the cove and out into the open bay with a strength almost irresistible.

But unmindful of these things, Budd bade his oxen go on; and though they at first shrunk from entering the angry waters, he plied the stinging blows of the lash until they began the passage. For a rod they went steadily on, though the waves dashed over their backs and rushed into the cart, wetting Budd to the knees. Then there came suddenly a huge billow, rolling outward, that lifted the cart and oxen from the road-bed and swept them out into the bay.

The moment Budd realized that the cart was afloat and the oxen were swimming for their lives, his impulse was not to save himself, but the unfortunate beasts that through his rashness had been brought into danger. Springing, therefore, between them, he caught hold of the yoke with one hand, and with the other wrenched out the iron pin that fastened it to the tongue, and thus freed them from the cart.

In the effort, however, he lost his hold upon the yoke, and the next minute found himself left alone, struggling with the angry billows.

He was now forced to look out for himself, and could not watch the fate of the oxen, even had he had an inclination to do so. Indeed, with his water-soaked clothing, which greatly impeded his efforts, there was already a serious question whether he would be able to reach the shore, good swimmer though he was. With a strength born from the very sense of the danger that overwhelmed him he turned his face toward the fast receding shore and swam manfully for it. For a time he seemed to be gaining, but both wind and tide were against him, and his strength was soon exhausted. Slowly he felt himself sinking. Already the waves were dashing over his head. He made one spasmodic effort to regain the surface; then he had a faint consciousness of being caught by a huge billow and hurled against some hard object, and all was blank.

Budd plied the stinging blows of the lash until suddenly a huge billow lifted the cart and oxen from the road-bed and swept them into the bay.—(See page 25.)

CHAPTER IV.

A NEW FRIEND.

HOW LONG Budd remained unconscious he never exactly knew. It must have been some hours, however, for when he recovered sufficiently to look about him it was night; at least a darkness almost thick enough to be felt was all around him. He could hear the wind whistling fiercely above his head, yet he felt it not. He could hear the sound of dashing waves but faintly, as though some distance away. He was evidently lying upon a hard board or floor; yet to it there was a gentle, undulating motion, like that of a boat in some sheltered harbor, or drawn, bow up, onto a sandy beach.

With difficulty he sat up. His clothes were heavy with water, and he was stiff and numb from cold and exposure. He put out his right hand, and it rested upon a short board partition; he stretched out his left hand, and it touched a similar one, about the same distance away. Then he knew he was in the body of his ox-cart, which had in some way become detached from its wheels. It must have been this into which he had been providentially thrown just as he had lost consciousness. But *where* was the cart-body?

Certainly it was no longer tossed about by the angry waters of the bay. Where, then, had it landed? He rose up, and his head came so forcibly in contact with a heavy planking that he was thrown off his feet. Rubbing the bruised spot tenderly, he crept along to the side of the cart-bed and put out his hand as far as possible; but it touched nothing. Slowly stepping over the side, he found himself standing in a few inches of water. Walking directly ahead a few steps, he came up against a solid wall, that extended either way farther than he could reach.

He now knew that he was under some wharf, where the waves had tossed the cart-bed. This accounted for the planking above his head, for his hearing the whistling wind without feeling it, for the sound of the dashing of the waves at such a distance from him, and for the heavy darkness settled around. But *what* wharf was it? Which way should he go to find the opening by which he had entered?

He straightened himself up and looked steadily first in one and then in an opposite direction. He soon became convinced that to the left he could see a little more clearly than to the right, and that it was from that direction that came what little air he could feel stirring. In that direction, then, he determined to go.

As he advanced the water deepened, and the roof became more elevated. Not only could he now stand erect, but the planking was higher above his

head than he could reach. Soon the stone wall ceased, and wooden piles heavily boarded took its place. Now he saw a light space just ahead; the wind fanned his cheek; the opening was not far off; but the water was up to his neck, and he must swim for it. A few strokes, and he was in the open air. It was very dark, yet not with the intenseness he had experienced under the wharf. The wind and the rain beat fiercely upon him. Unless some house were near, he had better return under the dock for shelter and wait for morning.

With the little strength that remained to him he drew himself up onto the wharf and looked anxiously about him. As he looked, a great hope sprung up within his heart. Not far away, and gleaming brightly through the thick darkness, was a light. With a hoarse cry of exultation he staggered to his feet and went toward it. Brief as the walk was, it exhausted him. He was afraid that he would not reach the house from whose window he now knew the light shone forth, and in his despair he shouted:

"Help! Help!"

The next instant the door of the building swung open, letting out a flood of light upon the exhausted lad, and a voice asked:

"Who are you? Where are you?"

"Here!" answered Budd, feebly, stretching out his hands toward the stranger, who sprung forward and caught him just as he was falling helplessly at his feet.

The stranger was a youth no older nor larger than Budd himself; but he showed that he possessed enormous strength by lifting his helpless companion in his arms and carrying him into the house.

Closing the door against the storm, he went to work upon Budd with a directness and skill that showed he knew just what to do for an exhausted person. The wet clothing was stripped off; the numbed and chilled body was rubbed until the blood began to circulate freely through it; dry clothing and a warm blanket were then wrapped about the recovering lad, and he was laid upon a rude pallet of straw before the rusty stove, in which, however, a good fire was burning. Nor did the young stranger's attention to his unexpected guest end here. From some unseen quarter he brought forth a tin cup, and filled it with hot coffee from a pot on the stove. Milk and sugar were also fished out of their hiding-places and added to the beverage; then the whole was put to Budd's lips, with the simple comment:

"There; drink that down, and I'll warrant you'll be kicking round here as lively as a kitten, in a few minutes."

Budd drained the offered cup, and then said, gratefully:

"I don't know how I shall ever repay you for your kindness to me. I was pretty near used up, I declare."

The young host took the cup from his guest without a word, and refilled it. Sipping this slowly off

himself, he eyed his visitor until he had finished it; then he asked, abruptly:

"Will you tell me how you came here, Budd Boyd?"

"Where am I? Who are you?" asked Budd, surprised that the lad had called him by name, and sure that he had never seen him before.

The boy-host gave a comical shrug of his shoulders, and with a flourishing gesture answered:

"I am Judd Floyd, at your service. This is Fox Island, where I have for the present taken up my solitary abode, and am monarch of all I survey. But how came you here in all this tempest? Did you see my light streaming far across the watery deep, and attempt to walk over? Hanged if I wouldn't think so, from the looks of your clothes!"

Weak as he was, Budd could not help laughing at the serio-comic air of his companion, but as briefly as possible he related his adventure.

"'Twas a close shave, now, wasn't it?" Judd said, with a shrill whistle, as Budd concluded. "I don't want to try that sail, at least on that kind of a craft, such a night as this, you bet. Lucky for you I was here, else you might have perished from sheer exhaustion before morning."

Budd at once admitted this; then he asked:

"But how is it that you knew me? And how long have you been here?"

"Oh! I've seen you up at the village with Benton's ox-team, and inquired your name. I couldn't help remembering it, for it sounds much like my

own. Yours is Budd Boyd, and mine is Judd Floyd. Guess we must be sort of second-rate twins," said the irrepressible Judd with a comical grin; and indeed the lads, in size, figure and features, were not unlike.

"How long have I been here?" he went on.

"Just a week to-night, by actual count. You see, I have lived, as far back as I can remember, in an old shanty just out of the village. Pop got drunk as a steady business, and ma took in washing and ironing to keep our souls and bodies together. I know now I didn't help her as much as I ought, but she would keep me in school, and I did try to help her, out of school hours. But last winter she got rather tired of this world, and went where I trust she has peace and rest. She deserves them, for she never had them here;" and the lad tried to keep back the tears that would gather in his eyes.

"Well, after her death pop carried on worse than ever, and so the town authorities sent him up to the State Farm for a six-month term as an habitual drunkard. Then the same worthy individuals that disposed of him talked of putting me on the Poor Farm down there on Quidnessett Neck; but I had a slight objection to the arrangement, and the next morning I was among the missing.

"I'd been over here before, and knew there was an old stove, a chair or two, and some other odd pieces of furniture in the house; so I packed up a few necessary traps at the shanty, stowed them aboard pop's old boat, and came over here by night.

Here, too, I've remained in undisputed possession ever since."

"How do you live?" asked Budd, with a good deal of curiosity.

"Oh! that's easy enough," said Judd, with a laugh. "I catch fish and dig clams. Some I eat; the rest I sell. That enables me to purchase what groceries and provisions I may want. I was over to the village and made some purchases early this morning. By and by, when the watering-places open up, I can get odd jobs enough. I shall fare as well as I have ever done, I assure you. I'm no pauper—not if I know myself. By the way, won't you have something to eat?"

Without waiting for Budd to answer, he drew up before the fire a large box. On this he spread a cloth; then he brought out some cold ham, some fresh bread, butter, cookies, poured out another cup of coffee, and remarked:

"I've eaten supper already, but help yourself. There's more, when this is gone."

Budd accepted his host's hospitality and made out a comfortable meal.

Then Judd said:

"I'm sorry I've no bed for you to sleep on. That old pallet is all I brought over, but you are welcome to that. I'll roll up in a blanket and sleep on the floor. It won't be the first time I've done it;" and soon both boys were sound asleep.

The next morning Budd felt quite like himself; but the storm still raged, and he was obliged to re-

main quietly with his new friend. Toward noon, however, the force of the tempest was spent, and Judd announced his willingness to take the anxious lad over to the main-land after dinner.

So not far from one o'clock they embarked in Judd's boat, and a half-hour later landed safely on "The Hummocks." Budd could find no trace of either the oxen or the missing wheels of the cart, and with a heavy heart he started off for Mr. Benton's.

As Judd parted with him he remarked:

"I say, Budd, I wouldn't be in your shoes for a good deal. There is no knowing what old Benton will do to you for losing his cart and oxen. You'd better go back to the island with me, and let him think you are dead."

"No," said Budd. "My duty is to go to him and tell him the whole story, let the consequences be what they may, and I shall do it."

"I always did admire pluck," replied Judd, in undisguised admiration, "and you have it. I'd rather take your sail of last night than go back and face the old tyrant. Only, if he kicks you off of the farm, remember you are welcome to go pards with me on the island. It's better than no place to lay your head."

Thanking him for the invitation, which he knew was as genuine as it was rough, Budd turned away and walked slowly along the roadway leading to Mr. Benton's, wondering greatly what that cruel and grasping man would really say and do when he

learned of the serious loss he had sustained. Doubtless the fact that he had been so long away had led Mr. Benton to believe that he had perished. Would not his providential deliverance from a watery grave awaken such feelings of gratitude, even in that stony heart, that the pecuniary loss he had experienced would be forgotten by the avaricious man? Budd hoped so; and yet it was with terrible misgivings he went bravely on, to meet whatever fate might be in store for him.

CHAPTER V.

MR. BENTON'S WRATH.

AS BUDD drew near to the farm of Mr. Wright he was greatly tempted to go in and talk over with him the unfortunate predicament into which his adventure had brought him; but he was saved that trouble, for as he got opposite that gentleman's residence he came out and hailed the lad.

"Hello, Budd!" he exclaimed. "You have, then, survived last night's storm. We are glad to know it, for we had given you up for lost."

His words re-assured Budd's troubled spirit somewhat, for he now knew that he had been missed, and possibly searched for. Anxious, therefore, to know just how his absence had been regarded, he went forward to meet Mr. Wright, saying:

"Yes, I pulled through, though at one time I did not expect to do so. What did you think had become of me and my team?"

"Oh, when night came and you didn't return home, Benton thought you probably had got shut onto the lower hummock by the tide, and would be around all right in a few hours, so he said nothing to any of us about your prolonged absence; but this morning, when the oxen arrived home without you

or the cart, he was a little frightened, and came directly over here for me and my man to go with him to look you up. As we went along down to 'The Hummocks' we made inquiries about you, but could not ascertain that you had been seen since one o'clock yesterday, when you were on your downward trip for sea-weed. Arriving at 'The Hummocks,' we carefully searched them from one end to the other, but found no trace of you or the cart, though we came across a sheltered spot, back of a clump of trees, where the oxen had evidently stayed all night. The sea-weed we saw had not been taken, and so we knew that you hadn't got across to the lower hummock. There was but one inference—that the wind and tide had carried you out to sea.

"'Benton,' says I, 'the oxen, cart and lad were all taken off the roadway by some huge billow, and the first thing the lad thought of was to free the oxen, and they got ashore; but the cart and boy have gone no one knows where. Just as likely as not they are lying out there under the tossing waves. I guess we'd better go up the shore a piece, however, and see if we can find anything of them.' So we went up the coast as far as the village, but saw nothing of you, and could find no one that had. Finally we gave up the search and came home. Tell me, though, how you escaped?"

Budd related in substance the story already familiar to the reader—not, however, without frequent interruptions from Mr. Wright, who seemed anxious

to know more of the details, and also repeatedly declared it was the most marvelous escape he ever heard of. At length Mr. Wright seemed satisfied, and Budd was permitted to ask the question he cared most of all to ask:

"How did Mr. Benton seem to feel when he came to the conclusion that I and the cart had been swept out to sea?"

"Well, to tell you the truth," replied Mr. Wright, bluntly, "he seemed to care a good deal more for the loss of the cart than he did for you. He danced around there on the beach, cursing what he called your folly, and telling how much the cart had cost him only last fall. I at last got tired of his talking, and told him you were of more account than all the carts that had been made since the world began, and that if he had a spark of decency about him he would shut his mouth. I suggested, also, that you would never have been lost if he hadn't set you to drawing sea-weed on a day that he was old enough and experienced enough to know it wasn't a safe thing to do in that particular locality, and that I wasn't sure but he could be held accountable to the law for your death. That scared him, so he came right off home, and was as dumb as a beast all the way."

"What do you think he'll do when he finds I'm alive, but the cart is lost?" asked Budd, a little anxiously, it must be confessed.

"Well, he ought not to say or do anything," answered Mr. Wright, with a little show of indigna-

tion in his tones. "The body of the cart can be towed back to 'The Hummocks,' and it is possible that the wheels and under-gear may yet turn up. But even if they are not recovered, what does the loss amount to compared with your safety? Still I have already learned that you can never know what John Benton may do, and I guess I had better be somewhere around when you tell him your story. You go on over and face the music, and I'll follow along in time to interfere if there is any serious trouble between you."

Thanking Mr. Wright for his kind offer, Budd, with a much lighter heart than he had had for twenty-four hours, went on toward home. He went directly into the house, on arriving there, and almost frightened Mrs. Benton to death by his sudden and unexpected appearance. He succeeded in convincing her, however, that it was really he, and that he had providentially been saved. Nor could he help noticing that she seemed greatly relieved in mind to find that he was really alive and unharmed; and taking encouragement from that fact, he went off to the barn, where he had learned Mr. Benton was.

The farmer was down upon his knees on the threshing-floor mending a horse-cultivator when the lad entered and said:

"Well, Mr. Benton, I'm back at last, and ready to report for my prolonged absence."

At his words Mr. Benton leaped to his feet, and for a moment seemed not to know what to say. It

was very evident that he had never expected to see the boy again. Taking advantage of his embarrassment, Budd went on:

"I'm glad, too, to learn that the oxen reached home unharmed. I did my best to save them, though I nearly lost my own life doing so."

Before he could say more Mr. Benton broke angrily in upon him:

"But ye lost the cart, ye little rascal, an' I gin twenty-five dollers fer it at auction only las' fall; an' I'd like to know who's goin' to pay me fer that?"

"I can, if it is necessary," replied Budd, swelling with indignation; "but before I do it I shall want some one else's opinion about it other than your own. Though I may have been a little rash in undertaking to cross the roadbed while the tide was so high, I am in no other sense to blame, and I would like to see anyone else do better than I did under the circumstances;" and Budd rapidly described the trying ordeal through which he had passed.

"Hum!" remarked Mr. Benton, sneeringly, as the lad finished his story. "Ye were sca't to death at a little runnin' water. If ye'd stayed in the cart an' let the oxen alone, they'd have fetched ye an' the cart out all rite. 'Twas all yer own fault."

Budd's cheeks burned with resentment.

"It was not," he emphatically declared.

"Don't ye tell me I lie!" said Mr. Benton, savagely, picking up one of the handles of the cultivator that had been detached from the machine and lay upon the barn-floor near him.

"I am sure the oxen would have drowned had I not freed them from the cart," answered Budd, firmly, "and any reasonable person would tell you the same thing."

"Take that, ye young whelp!" cried Mr. Benton, raising the cultivator-handle and bringing it down with a force sufficient to have killed the boy had it hit him.

Fortunately for Budd he saw the stick coming, and jumped quickly to one side. The force of the blow fell upon the barn-floor; but Mr. Benton immediately recovered himself and rushed down upon the lad. Seeing that there was no alternative, Budd grappled with him, and then began a terrible struggle for the mastery. Had the lad possessed his usual strength he might have come off victor, for he had caught his antagonist directly under the armpits with a powerful hug, and thus had decidedly the advantage in his hold. But he was still weak from his trying experience of the night before, and that more than counterbalanced the advantage he had secured in position.

Up and down the threshing-floor the contestants went; against stanchion and post and door were they hurled; over and upon the heterogeneous articles scattered about the floor they stumbled; finally Budd's foot struck upon some unseen object that rolled under it, and he fell heavily upon the floor, with Mr. Benton on top of him. With a shout of triumph the angry man sat down upon the lad's breast, and with his clinched fist began to pound

him. He had struck but two blows, however, when he was caught by the collar, dragged unceremoniously off from the prostrate boy, and thrown with no gentle hand back against the nearest stanchion. Then the voice of Mr. Wright was heard sternly saying:

"Stand there, you miserable coward; and let me tell you, if you lay the weight of your finger on that lad again I'll give you the worst thrashing you ever had in your life!"

At those words, Mr. Benton cowered back against the nearest mow and remained motionless. Experience had already taught him that he could not trifle with Peter Wright.

Helping Budd to his feet, Mr. Wright asked:

"Are you hurt? I was delayed longer at the house than I expected, or this miserable wretch would not have had a chance to lay his hand upon you. Tell me just what he has done?"

Budd gave a fair account of the contest from beginning to end, and declared that he was not seriously hurt, though he did not know what might have happened but for Mr. Wright's opportune arrival.

Mr. Benton sullenly admitted the truth of the boy's story, but whiningly declared he had not meant to hurt him, but only to give him a wholesome lesson, so that he wouldn't destroy any more property for him in such a reckless manner.

"I might believe your statement had I not caught you in the very act of pounding him," said Mr.

Wright, with emphasis; "and surely striking at him with one of the handles of that cultivator looks almost as though you meant to kill him. This, too, when he is not your boy, nor bound out to you, and you had no more right to chastise him than you have to strike me. I don't know whether the boy has any friends or not, but as long as I am a member of the Town Council he shall be regarded as a ward of the town, and over him we shall throw our protection and care. I suspect you have imposed upon him ever since he has been with you. What kind of a bargain have you made with him, anyway?"

"I give him ten dollers a munth an' bord for six munths, which, as he knowed nuthin' 'bout farmin' when he come, is fair pay," explained Mr. Benton.

"No it is not, and you know it as well as anyone. He has done a man's work ever since he has been with you; and admitting his ignorance on some things, fifteen dollars a month is little enough. Does he pay you?"

This last question was addressed to Budd.

"No, sir," he said. "You see, the night I hired out to him he drew up a paper for me to sign, and in that, though I did not so understand it at the time, he is to pay me only at the end of the six months. At least that is his interpretation of the paper."

"Benton, let me see it," demanded Mr. Wright.

With evident reluctance Mr. Benton took the paper from his pocket-book and handed it to his neighbor.

Mr. Wright read it over carefully; then he deliberately tore it up, saying:

"The paper is worthless, for there are no witnesses; but even if there were, it could be set aside, as you have taken an unfair advantage of the lad. You meant to get rid of paying him anything, and I suspected it, for it is an old trick of yours."

Budd here explained how Mr. Benton had used the paper at the time he had asked for his first month's pay.

"Exactly," said Mr. Wright; "it served his purpose then, and would every time you asked for money until he had got ready to get rid of you. Then he would have seen to it that you quitted the farm before the six months were up, and so refused to pay you your wages. Now admit, Benton, that that was your game."

Mr. Benton, thus appealed to, looked sheepish enough, but would not admit that it had been his purpose to defraud the lad. He was afraid that Budd might demand the amount due him and leave at once. This he did not want the boy to do, for he preferred to have him remain, even though he should have to pay him full wages. He was hardly prepared, however, for Mr. Wright's next demand.

"Here, Benton," he said, as the man was about to return his wallet to his pocket, "before you put that away I want you to pay Budd twenty dollars."

"But his two months are not up yet," objected Benton.

"Never mind, he has earned it," said Mr. Wright;

and as the man, to Budd's great astonishment, meekly handed over two ten-dollar bills, Mr. Wright with a twinkle in his eyes added:

"Now put another ten along with the others, Benton, for the assault you have made upon the lad. If you don't, I'll have you arrested before morning for assault and battery, and it will cost you twice that amount at least."

Mr. Benton refused; begged off; offered half the amount; but Mr. Wright was inexorable, and the miserable man finally handed Budd another ten-dollar bill.

"Now," said Mr. Wright to Budd, "go to the house and pack up your things, and get ready to go with me. I don't propose to leave you in Benton's clutches any longer; there is no knowing what he might do to you."

And notwithstanding the pleadings and promises of Mr. Benton, Mr. Wright fifteen minutes later departed, with Budd by his side.

CHAPTER VI.

THE NEW FIRM.

IF BUDD, as he walked along toward Mr. Wright's, was filled with secret exultation at the happy turn in his affairs, it was, to say the least, pardonable. Bruised and sore though he was from his struggle with Mr. Benton, he had nevertheless, through the opportune interference of Mr. Wright, come off victor. With two months' pay in his pocket, and ten dollars more for the assault to which he had been subjected, he was not disposed to grumble; in fact he was quite ready to forgive the miserable man who had so ruthlessly attacked him. But there was one thing that piqued his curiosity and led him soon to say:

"There is something I would like to have you explain, Mr. Wright."

"What is it?" Mr. Wright asked, pleasantly.

"Why was Mr. Benton so docile in your presence? I should never have believed that he would have cowered down so to any man."

Mr. Wright laughed.

"There are several reasons for it," he said. "Tyrants are almost always cowards at heart, and Mr. Benton is no exception to the rule. Ten years ago,

when I came here, I was continually in trouble with him. First it was my cattle; then my children; at last our boundary line. I caught him one day actually setting over my fence. I remonstrated with him, and he, in his anger, struck me with his ox-lash. Snatching it from his hand, I whipped him until he begged for mercy. Of course he brought suit against me, and I brought a counter-suit. I was fortunate enough to win both cases, and the costs and fines that he had to pay amounted to over one hundred dollars. I also had him put under heavy bonds to keep the peace, and from that time have had no serious trouble with him. In fact he seems to both fear and respect me. Catching him to-night in the very act of assaulting you gave me a decided advantage; and though I have doubtless gone beyond any real right I possessed in my dealing with him, he was not in a condition to dispute it. You and I will have no further trouble with him."

But in this last assertion Mr. Wright was wrong, at least so far as Budd was concerned.

On reaching the house, Mr. Wright opened the door and motioned Budd to enter, at the same time saying to his wife:

"Here, Sarah, can you find a place for this lad for awhile? I've taken him out of Benton's clutches," and he related to her, in substance, the happenings at his neighbor's farm.

"Oh, yes, I think so," the lady replied, giving Budd a hearty and motherly welcome, which at once caused him to feel at home.

Budd was shown to a chamber, where he deposited his bundle. Though no larger than the one he had occupied when at Mr. Benton's, and containing scarcely more furniture, there was nevertheless an air of comfort and neatness about it that awakened old and sweet memories in the boy's mind. A bright bit of carpet was on the floor, a white curtain was at the open window, while snowy sheets and pillow-cases upon the bed suggested sweet repose. Tears stood in the lad's eyes as he returned down-stairs and tried to again thank Mr. Wright for the deep interest he had shown in him, an entire stranger.

"Well, well," said Mr. Wright, not without some emotion; "I don't know as I deserve any special thanks for what I have done. I couldn't leave you over there and have any peace of conscience. I don't know, any more than you do, what the outcome of my act will be, so far as your future is concerned. I would gladly hire you, but have now all the help I need. You are welcome, however, to stay here until you can find a place. With what Benton has given you, you will be just as well off should you not get work under a month. I've no fear but what you'll do enough to pay your board, and we will both keep an eye out for something suitable for you to do."

Though Budd regretted greatly that Mr. Wright could not hire him, he gratefully accepted the arrangement proposed, and determined that his benefactor should have no cause to complain of either his want of gratitude or willingness to be of help.

With this idea in mind he followed Mr. Wright out to the barn, and helped him and his man do the chores. He seemed almost intuitively to know what was the next thing to be done; and so pleased was Mr. Wright with his readiness and tact that he confided to his wife, that night, that he didn't know but they had better try and keep the lad. The very next day, however, there was destined to come to Budd an opening which was to change measurably his life, and prove an important link in the solution of the mystery which was apparently hanging over him.

He worked all the forenoon of the next day for Mr. Wright, but at that gentleman's request went with him in the afternoon up to the village.

"Perhaps we shall be able to find some place for you," Mr. Wright had said as they drove off.

Reaching the village, Mr. Wright left Budd to look out for the team while he attended to some matters of business. As the lad sat in the wagon holding the horses Judd Floyd came hurriedly down the street on his way toward the wharf. He had a market-basket on his arm filled with bundles, and had evidently been purchasing provisions to take over to his island home. He readily espied Budd, and recognizing Mr. Wright's team, suddenly stopped, remarking:

"Hello! changed masters, have you? Shows your wisdom. But tell us about it."

Budd shook the speaker's extended hand warmly, and telling him to put his basket into the wagon,

and to get up on the seat, he gave him a faithful account of himself from the time he had left Judd on "The Hummocks" until he had now met him again.

"So you are out of a job," he remarked, as Budd concluded. "Now, isn't that jolly! You can come over to the island with me, and we'll go into the fish and clam business together. I'll guarantee as good wages as you were getting, and you'll be your own boss at the same time."

"Is that so?" asked Budd, with some show of interest.

"Of course it's so," replied Judd, with remarkable emphasis on the first two words. "I've averaged fifty cents for every day I've been on the island; and so can you, if you'll come. We ought to do better, for with two we can enlarge our business many ways."

"How's that?" asked Budd.

Before Judd could answer, Mr. Wright came back to the wagon. That lad eyed him a little apprehensively at first, evidently fearing lest he might, as a member of the Town Board, call him to an account for his sudden disappearance from the shanty near the village a few days before. But Mr. Wright's words at once re-assured him, for he said:

"How do you do, Judd? I'm glad to see you, and to hear so good an account of you as Budd has given me." Then lowering his voice, so as not to be heard by anyone passing, he added: "You need have no fear of the Town Board, my lad, as long as you

show a disposition to be industrious and take care of yourself. We wish you every success."

"He was just asking me to go over to the island and enter into partnership with him," explained Budd; "he says I can make as much as I was getting from Mr. Benton."

"And not have half as rough an experience," Judd chimed in, with a laugh.

"How do you expect to make it, Judd?" Mr. Wright asked, a little doubtingly.

"Selling fish and clams; taking out fishing-parties; doing odd jobs at the watering-places," answered Judd, pithily. "There's money in it."

"Do you think so?" asked Budd of Mr. Wright.

"There may be," he answered, musingly. "Judd knows better than I do. Of course it is now a little late to hire out among the farmers. You have some money as capital. I'm not sure but you could, if prudent and industrious, do as well at this as at anything else for the summer months."

"Come along over to the island with me and stay to-night. If I don't convince you this thing is practicable, then I'll set you ashore at 'The Hummocks' in the morning, and you can go back to Mr. Wright's until you find another job," said Judd, enthusiastically.

Mr. Wright laughed a little.

"Go on, Budd," he advised; "and if I can be of any help to either of you, call on me. All success to the new firm!"

Budd immediately leaped from the wagon, fol-

lowed by Judd, and then the two boys went hastily down to the wharf where their boat was tied. Embarking therein, each took an oar and pulled for the island, their minds brimful of the prospective partnership.

It was not, however, until the island was reached and supper eaten that the lads settled themselves for what they called their "business" talk. The sun was just setting; the air was soft and balmy; scarcely a ripple was on the water. Taking seats upon the rocks south of the house, and where they could look for miles down the bay, they began the all-important conversation.

Budd was the first to speak.

"Here, Judd," he said, "let us begin at the very root of things. Who does this island belong to?"

"Why, I believe there are two or three parties claiming it," replied Judd. "But why do you ask? It has always been regarded as common property. Even the fellow that built the house here paid no rent for the island."

"That has nothing to do with our case," interposed Budd, promptly. "We must have a right to be here—a right we can defend against all comers. Who are the proper parties to see about leasing the island."

"A Mr. Fowler, who lives near Mr. Wright, and two men named Scott, over in the western part of the town; but I don't believe they will object to our staying here, if Mr. Wright will see them about it."

"We will find out in the morning," Budd said, de-

cisively, "and I'll mark that as the first item of business to attend to. Now as to our stock in trade. I have thirty dollars that can go in as my part of the capital. What can you furnish?"

Judd looked a little crestfallen, at his companion's words.

"Why," he said, "I can't put in much. I have the boat——"

"Which is worth how much?" interrupted Budd.

"Perhaps ten dollars," replied his partner, with a look of encouragement. "It's a pretty good yawl; and then I have a little over five dollars in money; that is all."

"No, it is not," Budd said. "How about the things over at the shanty? They are yours, are they not?"

"Yes; and as the shanty don't belong to pop, they ought to be moved. If we get the island, we can bring everything over here, and set up housekeeping in pretty decent style."

"Exactly," went on Budd, smilingly; "and while they are yours, I shall be having the benefit of them, and that is worth considerable. But there is one thing you possess more valuable yet, and for which you ought to have full allowance."

"What do you mean?" asked Judd, in wonder.

"Knowledge of the business," responded Budd. "I can row or sail a boat—have been used to that all my life; but I know nothing of this bay, its fishing or clamming-grounds, and I am almost a stranger in the community, while you are well known.

Now, I'll tell you what I'm willing to do, though to my mind I shall have the best of the bargain. I'll put in my thirty dollars against your boat, your household goods, and your fuller knowledge of the grounds on which we are to operate, and we'll be equal partners—provided, of course, we can hire the island. What do you say?"

Judd arose from his seat with a sparkling face and crossed over to where his chum was sitting.

"Here's my hand on it; and I say, Budd, you are a brick," was his rather ambiguous but expressive answer.

Budd had caught something of his companion's enthusiasm, and with intense eagerness he continued:

"Now as to our plan of operations. In this you must be the chief adviser."

"Thirty-five dollars in money as a basis," said Judd, slowly. "If we only had a hundred, I would say invest in a fish-pound. As it is, we will have to content ourselves with smaller operations at first. A gill-net would work nicely over in 'the narrows' at the south of 'The Hummocks,' and would cost about eight dollars. We must have that."

"How do you work it?" inquired Budd.

"It has large meshes, and you can stretch it right across 'the narrows,' fastening it to stakes on either side so as to keep it upright. The leads on the lower edge keep that down to the bottom. We will set it at night just at the turning of the tide to go out: then whatever fish are up the cove will come down against it, and more or less of them will get

their heads through the meshes and be caught. Six hours after, the tide will turn, and all fish going into the cove will come up against the opposite side, and some of them will be caught. In the morning we will pull it, and leave it up until the next night. We ought to get as many fish that way as we can with our hooks—perhaps more; and thus we will have a double quantity to dispose of," exclaimed Judd.

"Good!" exclaimed his comrade. "What next?"

"We must put in some lobster-pots also; but those we can make, and two dollars will buy all the necessary lumber. That will take ten dollars, and leave us twenty-five. With that we must buy the sloop Sea Witch, and then we can take out sailing or fishing-parties in good shape, as well as make the wind do a large part of our work for us. It will save lots of time and labor, as well as add to our revenue."

"It can't be much of a boat for that money," remarked Budd.

"You wouldn't say so, if you had seen her," declared Judd. "She is eighteen feet long, has a small cabin, is rigged with sail and jib, and cost just seventy-five dollars last summer. She belongs to a rich man who spent the summer here a year ago. He had her built for his son, who knew no more about a boat than a two-year-old child. He capsized her one day, and nearly lost his life, and now she is for sale. Nothing is the matter with her, except she carries too much canvas. Cut off a foot of

her mast, trim down her sail and jib, ballast her a little more heavily, and I'll warrant her to outsail anything of her length about here, and to be a good boat in a heavy sea also. I've examined her a dozen times, and talked with the man that made her. He'll tell you that it's just as I say. Of course her misfortune has prejudiced people against her, and that is why she can be bought so low. Once get her fixed, and we can sail her under a reef until we have earned the money to pay for the alterations. I wouldn't take a dollar less for her than she originally cost."

"All right! I'm ready to accept your judgment, and we certainly will be equipped better than I expected," remarked Budd.

"Then we must advertise our new firm and business by posters and in the local paper. I guess the printer will do the work for us and take his pay in trade, for I've sold him fish several times," went on Judd.

"Yes, we must do that," admitted his partner; "and we'll draw up our advertisement to-night. In the morning you can set me over onto 'The Hummocks,' and I will go up to Mr. Wright's, and consult with him about the hiring of the island and get my things. I'll join you in the village, where you can await my coming; and if we are successful in getting the island, we will make the other purchases, and by night be in readiness to begin moving your goods over here. By Monday next we can be all equipped for business."

"Let us keep together through all the arrangements," suggested Judd.

"Very well," consented Budd; and they returned to the house for the night.

Early the next morning the young partners set out upon the various business enterprises necessary to complete their arrangements. Mr. Wright willingly went with them to see the owners of the island, and they secured it at a rental of two dollars per month, and took a written lease to that effect. The sailboat, lumber and gill-net were purchased in rapid succession, and the matter of advertising placed in the printer's hands. The next day the household articles were removed from the shanty to the island and arranged in the house. Only the three rooms on the ground floor were needed by the lads, and were settled as kitchen, sitting-room and bedroom. That day, also, posters were scattered about the village, and an advertisement appeared in the columns of the village weekly, as follows:

NEW FIRM! NEW FIRM!

BOYD & FLOYD.

We, the undersigned, would announce to the citizens of this community that we have this day formed a partnership, to be known as Boyd & Floyd. Our headquarters will be at Fox Island, which we have rented of the owners. We shall have fish, oysters, clams, lobsters and scallops for sale, each in their season. On Tuesdays and Fridays of each week we shall be in the surrounding villages, ready to fill all orders in our line. On the other days of

the week all orders dropped in the village post-office, Box 118, will secure prompt attention. Hotels and boarding-houses will be supplied at wholesale rates. Sailing or fishing-parties will be taken out in our sloop Sea Witch at reasonable prices. This boat is to be remodeled, and made sea-worthy in every respect. By honest dealing, fair charges, and prompt attention, we hope to secure our share of your patronage.

BUDD BOYD.
JUDD FLOYD.

Fox Island, May 20, 18—.

It was late on Saturday evening when the lads got back to the island after carrying around their posters. They were very tired from their long tramp of the day and the other work their plans had necessitated; but they were contented, for they felt that their firm was now fully organized and launched out upon the world.

CHAPTER VII.

BUSINESS BOOMS.

THE CRY, "Wake up, Budd! All hands ahoy!" greeted Budd's ears early Monday morning. He opened his eyes at the command.

The sun had not yet risen. The faint light of early dawn was coming in through the last window of the room. Judd was out of bed and busily dressing, and he it was who had given the call. The next moment Budd was beside him, and they chatted away like magpies as they completed their dressing. The whole outline for the day's work was soon laid out.

"It will be low tide at nine o'clock, and we must have breakfast eaten and be on our clamming-grounds at least two hours before that," Judd said, by way of beginning the conversation.

"And where is it you said we would go?" Budd responded.

"Down the bay to the upper end of Plum Beach Point," was the answer. "There hasn't been much digging there this season, and we ought to find clams plenty and of good size. We'll dig there until the turn of the tide; then we'll go across the bay, under the lee of Conanicut, where there is a

sunken ledge, off which, if I'm not much mistaken, I'll show you as good fishing as you ever enjoyed."

"What'll we be likely to catch?" Budd then inquired, just as they both entered the kitchen and began preparations for breakfast.

"Rock-bass, tautog, and the everywhere-present and forever-biting sea-perch," Judd laughingly answered.

"What about the gill-net?"

"Oh, we'll put that in just at night, and get another run of fish entirely different. Scup, butterfish, and succoteague, or weak-fish, will probably be the principal kinds we shall haul then. That will give us quite a variety for our sale to-morrow," explained Judd.

Breakfast was eaten, a lunch packed, and lines, baskets and hoes stowed on board the sloop by sunrise. In fact the golden orb peeped above Conanicut, and sent a dazzling gleam down across the dancing waters, just as the lads weighed anchor, hoisted the sails, and with a gentle breeze from the northwest started down the bay. A half-hour later they had run within fifty yards of Plum Beach Point, where they anchored. Putting baskets and hoes in the yawl, which was in tow, they cast off the painter and rowed ashore. The tide was well out. Under the click of the hoes the clams sent up their tiny spouts of water, revealing their hiding-places; and, throwing off their coats, the boys were soon at work.

For over two hours they toiled without interrup-

tion; then Judd, who had been watching the waves for an instant, cried out:

"Hold up, Budd! The tide has turned, and we must be off for our fishing-grounds. First, however, we will wash and sort over these bivalves—the large and sound ones for the trade, the small and broken ones for bait. Here goes!"

Suiting the action to the word, he emptied his basket in a shallow pool close beside him.

Budd followed his example, and with many an exclamation of delight at the quantity they had obtained, the lads soon completed this work, and entering the yawl pulled back to the sloop. Ten minutes later she was tacking across the bay for the fishing-grounds, known as "Hazard's pork-barrel."

Budd soon found that his comrade had not overestimated the piscatorial possibilities of the place. Scarcely were their baited hooks cast into the briny deep when the fish began to bite with a steadiness and greed that would have delighted the most ambitious angler. For three hours this continued, then suddenly all the biting ceased.

"Our luck is over for to-day," Judd announced, pulling in his lines. "We may as well weigh anchor and start for home."

"We have done well, anyway," Budd said, with a touch of pride, as he gazed at the fish they had caught.

"We needn't be ashamed of the morning's work," put in his partner, laconically. "We'll find a great many mornings when we won't do as well."

The fish had been thrown, as they were caught, into a sort of "well" that Judd had arranged in the bow of the sloop for them, and the boys did not overhaul them until they had reached the island. Here, however, they were sorted and put into "cars" that were anchored just off the wharf.

"Twenty tautog, a dozen rock-bass and three dozen sea-perch make quite a showing," commented Budd as the sorting was finished. "Do you suppose we will sell all of them?"

"Not any of the sea-perch," replied Judd. "Some of those we must eat ourselves. There are several ways too cook them, and you won't find them bad eating. We shall want the rest of them as bait for our lobster-pots. All the other fish will sell, however, without trouble."

The lads had eaten their luncheon while sailing homeward, but their appetites were only partially appeased, and so they immediately set about preparing what they called their "chief" meal. The fire was kindled, and a large kettle partly filled with water fresh from the well was put over it. Then a dozen of the larger perch were dressed, cut into small pieces, and put into the kettle just as the water reached a boiling-point; some potatoes, nicely peeled and sliced, were now added; and salt, pepper, a few slices of salt pork, and an onion or two, for seasoning, followed, and soon the delightful aroma of a fish-chowder began to fill the kitchen. While that was cooking the table was set, the johnny-cake baked, and the coffee made. In a little over an

hour after landing the boys had everything in readiness, and sat down to a dinner that, as they expressed it, was "fit for a king." Good appetites made it indeed a royal feast, and scarcely a vestige of the chowder remained when the lads rose from the table.

An hour or two of rest followed the clearing of the table, but just about six o'clock the partners put the gill-net into the yawl and pulled over to "the narrows," at the south of "The Hummocks." Before dark the net was stretched into place, made secure to stout stakes, and the boys were ready to return home.

"The tide is nearly out now," remarked Judd as they were leaving, "and so our best catch to-night will be on the incoming tide. To get the full advantage of this place, we want first an outgoing, then an incoming tide upon the net; but of course we have got to run our chances on that."

When back at the island, the day's work for the lads was by no means done. During the evening the kitchen was turned into a workshop, and with an old lobster-pot for a pattern, the partners began the manufacture of their new ones. Four of these were completely finished before they went to bed, and Judd expressed his satisfaction in the words:

"Four pots already done; and if, to-morrow night, we can finish four more, we shall have eight to put in on Wednesday morning, which will doubtless furnish us with some lobsters for our Friday trade."

At the pulling of the gill-net the next morning there was not as large a catch as the boys had hoped for; still what fish they did get were of good size and of the very best quality. There were six succoteague, weighing from two to four pounds each, one blue-fish, four scup and a striped bass.

Returning to the island for their other fish and the clams, the lads' plans for the day were speedily arranged. Budd was to take the yawl and a minor part of the stock in trade, and landing at "The Hummocks," was to secure, if possible, a horse and wagon of the nearest farmer, and peddle through the manufacturing villages in the western part of the county, while Judd was to take the larger part of the stock into the sloop and go up to the large town, a mile and a half up the bay. Each lad had provided himself with a note-book to take orders for their Friday trade; and wishing each other the best of success, they went their different ways.

Judd was the first to return to the island, arriving there about two o'clock with nearly all of his stock disposed of, and three dollars and twenty cents in cash in his pocket. Budd arrived an hour later, having sold everything he had carried, but had only two dollars and ten cents to show for his sales, as he had paid the farmer a dollar for the use of his horse and wagon.

Five dollars and a half was not, however, a bad showing for their first day's sale; and greatly encouraged by the outlook, the boys discussed further plans for the increase of their business.

The rest of the week was given to hard work. In no sense could it be said the lads were idle. Neither one thought of making their undertaking a mere pleasure; it was their *business*, and as such must have their best thought and their hardest labor. They took pride not only in success, but it must be the very *best* success they could possibly achieve.

The eight lobster-pots were put down Wednesday morning just off Thurston's Rocks, three miles down the bay. Each night saw a few more made, and each day a few more put down, until there was a string of the tiny buoys marking their whereabouts for two miles along the coast. Fish were angled for and clams were dug; and when one place failed others were visited, until the due quota of each had been secured. The gill-net was hauled and reset with all the regularity of the rising and setting sun. On Friday morning the persistent efforts of the lads had been fairly rewarded, and with double the amount of stock they had had on the previous Tuesday they set out, each to go his chosen route. But the demand equaled the supply, and both boys returned to the island without fish or bivalve.

The firm had agreed that Saturday should be their home day—the day they repaired their net, and traps, and pots, overhauled and fixed their boats, and attended to such other work as was necessary to keep their island and house in thorough order. On that night, too, they were to cast up accounts for each week, and find their financial standing.

The partners sat in their little sitting-room when this first casting was made and the result of the week announced:

"Twelve dollars and fifty-two cents above all expenses," declared Budd, who had been appointed the book-keeper for the firm.

"Not a bad amount for our first week," said Judd. Then with a quizzical look he asked, "Do you want to go back to Benton's, chum?"

"No, I guess not," replied Budd with a smile; "but haven't we enough cash on hand now to have the alterations made in the sloop?"

"Yes, I think so," replied his partner; "and if you are agreed, we'll take her down to Saundersstown, Monday morning, and leave her there for the alterations. We ought to get her again by Wednesday or Thursday, and can spare her better the fore part of the week than the last."

"All right," consented Budd.

It would be altogether too long a story, however interesting it might be, to follow the lads in their work day by day. Not every day was a fortunate one; nor did they always sell their stock completely out. Still, as June came in there began to be some demand for the sloop for fishing or sailing-parties, and this helped out the revenue. There also came occasionally an unusual haul of fish, which added no small sum of money to their treasury.

For instance, one June morning the lads were running down the bay to visit their lobster-pots. All at once Budd, who was forward, called out:

"Judd, look at this school of fish!"

The lad addressed glanced in the direction his companion had pointed, and the next moment had altered the course of the sloop and was running directly for the school. When within a few rods of it he exclaimed:

"It is as I thought; they are mackerel, and we are in luck. Get out our lines, take off the sinkers, and tie on some bits of white rag as quick as you can."

In wonder, Budd obeyed the directions. Meantime Judd had brought the sloop directly into the head of the school, and put up her helm and lashed it.

"Now throw over your lines, and pull in as fast as possible," were Judd's orders.

What sport followed! Up and down through that school, and it was an immense one, the sloop went, the lines trolling behind. In and out were the lines drawn and thrown until the boys' arms ached, and their backs felt like breaking. Larger and larger grew the pile of great mackerel on the bottom of the sloop, until the lads could literally fish no longer.

"Enough!" Budd cried. "I'm satisfied. Let us quit."

His comrade was not loath to follow his suggestion. A counting revealed the astonishing fact that over three hundred mackerel had been caught, and they were sold that afternoon in the city of Newport, where the lads carried them, for twenty-five dollars.

But just about the time the summer hotels were opening a circumstance happened that put the young partners in a position to do a larger work than even their ambitions had anticipated.

A few days after the surprising capture of mackerel the lads had taken a fishing-party down to Beaver Tail. On the return, late in the afternoon, and just as the sloop passed Dutch Island, Budd called his chum's attention to another sloop just ahead of them that had suddenly luffed up into the wind and nearly capsized. A moment later she fell off before the wind, her sail flapped loosely at the mast, and then it was seen that the man at the tiller had disappeared.

"Has the man fallen overboard?" was Budd's startling question.

"No," replied Judd, putting up his helm and running down toward the other sloop. "That is Ben Taylor's boat, and he is subject to fits. He has fallen into one, and that has let the vessel fall off before the wind."

A few minutes later the Sea Witch ran alongside of the drifting sloop; and, as Judd had said, her owner was lying in her bottom, unconscious. After a little consultation, Budd and one of the fishing-party boarded the craft, and carrying the man into the cabin and laying him in a berth, they put the boat before the wind and followed the Sea Witch up the bay to Wickford, where the unfortunate man belonged.

He was then taken to his home and a doctor sum-

moned, who pronounced the man alive, and under skillfully-applied restoratives he soon began to recover. Budd waited just long enough to know the man was out of danger; then he joined Judd at the wharf, and together they sailed off to their island home.

Three or four mornings later they were surprised by a visit from Mr. Taylor himself. After thanking the lads for the part they had taken in his rescue, he said:

"The doctor tells me I'm liable to have these turns almost any time, and with recurring frequency. That makes my wife opposed to my going on the water any longer, and I've come over to see if you lads won't take my business."

The boys knew he was the owner of three fish-pounds at various points on the bay, and with some eagerness they asked him his terms.

"Well," he said slowly, "I thought if you were willing to take my pounds off my hands, and the contract I have with city parties for the fish, I'd give you two-thirds of the net profits. The other third ought to be a fair percentage on the money I have invested. Then if you chaps should want to buy the pounds right out, you shall have them for what they cost me."

It was altogether too good an opportunity to let pass, and the boys promptly accepted the offer.

They still kept the home trade they had built up, but shipped to city parties all the fish they had exceeding the home demand, and thus found them-

selves in the possession of a weekly income that they had scarcely dreamed of. It was very plain that unless some unforeseen circumstance came in to prevent, their business had taken a boom that would insure them a most successful season.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE LOST OX-CART.

IT IS Saturday, the seventeenth of June, and therefore just four weeks since the new firm was fairly organized. The partners still use this day of the week for their special home duties. Let us, then, cross over to the island, take a peep at them, and see how they prosper.

As our visit is through the mind only, we will go to the house first. The windows and doors are open, and the balmy air of the early summer is circulating through the rooms with its life-giving and purifying powers. This suggests that the lads cannot be far away, though we do not find them within the building. They will not, however, object to our *mental* inspection of the premises, and therefore we may safely enter.

This room is the kitchen, reaching across the whole width of the house, and occupying what may be termed the west end of the structure. We notice that the carpetless floor is still damp, where it has been scrubbed to snowy whiteness; the stove shines with its glossy blackness; pots, kettles, dishes, chairs and table are all in place, and an air of exquisite neatness pervades the room.

Passing to our right we enter the sitting-room, not so large as the kitchen, and occupying the southeast corner of the house. There is a carpet on the floor—the only one Judd's mother possessed. A small table stands in the center of the room, and on it rests a lamp, a paper or two, and some books. A few cane-seated chairs, an old-fashioned and roomy lounge, and curtains at the two windows, complete the furnishings.

Back of the sitting-room is the bedroom, just large enough to contain the bedstead, the wash-stand, the bureau and two chairs. One thing, however, attracts our special attention. The bed is not a mere collection of blankets, thrown together and never disturbed. On the contrary, it would rival the thriftiest housewife's for its plump feather-bed, its white sheets and pillow-cases, and the neatness with which it is made. All the rooms, in fact, have by their neat appearance disclosed to us what we have already suspected—the lads have here *a home*, and not a mere abiding-place.

As we leave the house by the kitchen door we find just at the western end of the building a huge pile of stove-wood; and north of this, between the house and well, a small garden-patch, already green with its vegetables. Judd had begun this before Budd came; then it was enlarged somewhat, and now promises to be an important item toward their support.

Trusting the reader is not tired with this lengthy description, and assuring him it is really necessary

for the better understanding of the chapters that are immediately to follow, we will go on with our story.

Taking the well-beaten path running west from the kitchen door we are soon at the wharf, where we find the young partners busily at work. Judd is repairing one of their pound-nets, which he has spread out upon the grass just back of the dock. The hole is a large one, for a ten-foot shark went through the pound the morning before, letting out no one knows how many fish, and compelling the lads to take up the net for extensive repairs; but they know this is a circumstance they must occasionally look for, and Judd's cheery whistle, as he works, shows that he has met with no special discouragement in the mishap.

Budd is on board the sloop, which is anchored a little north of the wharf and within its shelter, scrubbing down her deck. Before a great while he finishes, and jumping into the yawl, sculls it rapidly to the shore. As he passes the outer end of the dock he pauses a moment and bends down to look underneath it. Then he brings the boat up into the opening, and catching hold of the top planking calls out:

"I say, Judd, I'm going under here to take a look at the cart-bed. I meant before this time to have taken it across to 'The Hummocks,' where Mr. Benton could get it. Perhaps I can do it to-day."

"Hold on a few minutes," responded Judd, looking over to where his partner was, "and I'll go with

you. You'll need help, and a lantern also. Go to the house and get that, and a stout rope; by that time I'll be through here."

Budd secured the yawl and went on to the house. Meantime Judd's needle flew swiftly in and out, and when his chum arrived with the necessary articles the last stitch in the seine had been taken.

Entering the boat, the lads pushed slowly in under the wharf, and soon came to the cart-bed which had brought Budd so providentially over to the island. It had been partly filled with sand by the tides, and was covered with a green slime; but the boys were dressed for dirty work, and soon got the unwieldy body in a condition to launch. Then hitching the rope to it, they fastened the other end to the yawl and slowly rowed out, dragging the cart-bed after them.

They now took it on shore, and with sand and broom and water scoured it until thoroughly clean; then they again fastened it to the yawl and started for "The Hummocks." It was a long pull and a hard one, but at length their task was accomplished, and the cart-body was safely landed on the north hummock and dragged up above high-water mark.

"There," said Budd, panting with his exertions; "I wish I could find the under-gear, and then I could return the whole vehicle to its owner, safe and sound."

"Possibly we might find it if we searched for it," replied Judd, walking down to the roadway between

"The Hummocks" and where his comrade had been swept off. Turning about, he looked off toward the island. "There," he said, with a wave of his hand —"a straight line from here touches the open end of the dock. Along that line somewhere you were thrown into the cart-bed, probably as it came to the surface; and beneath that spot, or somewhere near it, lies the wheels. How far off shore were you when that happened?"

"I can't tell," answered Budd. "It seemed to me a terrible long distance, and yet it may not have been. If we only had a water-glass we might row over to the island from this point, examining the bottom of the bay the whole distance."

"What is a water-glass?" asked his chum, with interest.

"I think I can make one," replied Budd, with energy. "You want a board tube about eighteen inches deep, with a glass set in at one end. You then put your face at the other and put the glass end a little beneath the surface, and the bottom of the sea for some distance around can be seen."

"We'll make one right away and try it," declared Judd, with enthusiasm. "If it works well, we can use it for a good many purposes. There is an eight-by-ten pane of glass over at the house. Is that large enough?"

"I think so—come on," responded his companion; and the next moment the yawl was on its way back to the island with a speed that fairly made the water foam at its bow.

It took but a half-hour to make the glass. Four boards of the requisite length were nailed together, forming a tube of just the size to take in the pane of glass at one end. A half-inch inside of this end a row of tacks were driven nearly to their head; then the glass was carefully dropped down until it rested upon them. Another row of tacks driven just outside of the glass completed the arrangement for holding it in place, and the instrument was finished. It now only remained to try it, and Budd ran down to the yawl, followed by his chum. They pushed the boat forty or fifty feet off shore, and put the water-glass to its test. To their delight it proved a perfect success, and through it the tiniest objects on the sea-bottom were clearly discernible.

"We had better go over to the point where the cart was swept off into the bay, to begin our search. Doubtless the under-gear is nearer that shore than this," suggested Budd.

His companion made no objection, and for the second time that morning they crossed to "The Hummocks."

Once opposite the road-bed, Judd took both oars and backed water slowly toward the wharf on the island, while Budd sat in the stern of the yawl, and with his head in the tube watched the bottom of the bay.

Rod after rod was gone over, when Budd suddenly removed his head from the tube with an exclamation of surprise.

"I say, Judd, the bottom here is covered solid

with scallops, and the bed seems to extend as far as I can see in either direction."

"Let me see," answered Judd, pulling in his oars and joining his companion at the stern of the boat.

Taking the glass, he examined the sea-bottom for some minutes intently.

"It is as you say," he exclaimed, joyfully. "Let us see if we can find the size of the bed. Row, if you will, to the south, while I watch."

Budd good-naturedly took the oars and pulled in the direction indicated. He had gone about fifty feet when Judd motioned him to stop.

"The bed ends here," he explained, removing his head from the glass. "Now row slowly east."

Budd did as directed for ten or twelve rods; then Judd again motioned him to stop.

"That is the width of the bed," he explained. "Now row north."

Again the boat shot in that direction, and for a long distance, until Judd shouted:

"Hurrah!"

"What is it?" asked Budd, excitedly.

"That ends the bed; and did you ever see such a one before? It must be all of two hundred feet in width and four or five hundred in length, and that means bushels of scallops and many a dollar for us when the law is off in September."

Budd needed no further explanation from his partner. He had heard him say again and again that they must keep a sharp lookout for the beds of these valuable bivalves, and here was a tremendous

one right almost at their island. He, too, joined in his companion's hurrah.

"I guess the glass has paid for its construction already," he commented, joining his chum at the stern.

Almost unconsciously he took the glass and looked through it. The yawl had drifted a little to the right of the place where Judd had given his hurrah, and was almost directly in line of the island's wharf. Budd looked but an instant, then he sprung to his feet and swung his hat.

"Judd," was his astonishing declaration, "those cart-wheels are just below us, and at the very north-east corner of the scallop-bed. The sea-bottom goes off suddenly, and the wheels are down the bank, and the tongue is almost upright in the water!"

"You don't say so!" cried Judd, no less elated than his comrade. Then suddenly he added: "That explains, too, chum, how the cart-bed was thrown off, and it must have been somewhere near here you were tossed within it."

"Yes," assented Budd; "but how are we going to get the gear on shore?"

"Let me take a look at it," said Judd.

It took a moment or two to locate the under-gear, and then Judd examined the sea-bottom carefully. He finally arose from the examination with the air of one who had come to a decision.

"Give me that rope," he said.

Budd handed him the rope that had been used to drag the cart-bed over to "The Hummocks."

Making a running-noose in one end, Judd lowered it into the water, at the same time directing Budd to hold the yawl steady. Again and again he seemed to get his rope in the position he desired, but it slipped away. Finally he gave a quick jerk, and then a cry of exultation.

"My noose has caught over the tongue and back of the iron clevis, and no power can pull it away. Let us see now if we can start the wheels."

He fastened the rope at the stern of the yawl and took one oar. Budd took the other, and together they pulled with all their strength; but the wheels did not move. After several fruitless attempts to start the ponderous under-gear the lads gave it up, and looked around for some other way of accomplishing their purpose.

"If it was not so far off shore," remarked Budd, "we could run our rope in there and hitch a pair of oxen to it, and then I guess the wheels would have to come."

"What the oxen can't do our sloop can," said Judd with animation.

"What is that?" asked Budd.

"Furnish us with power," was the reply. "See —the wind is rising. By afternoon we will have a strong breeze from the southwest. We'll come down here with the sloop, make fast, and take our first tack to the northeast; that will haul the wheels out from the sand in which they are imbedded. Then we'll make a tack due west and run the wheels just as near inshore as we can with the

sloop; after that we can use the yawl to finish the work."

A piece of board that lay in the bottom of the yawl was fastened as a buoy to the rope, and then the lads returned to the island, to wait until the rising wind had reached a sufficient velocity to warrant their undertaking.

It was not far from three o'clock that afternoon when they boarded the sloop and ran down to their improvised buoy. Another rope was fastened to that which had already been attached to the cart-tongue, and this, after its other end had been made secure to the stern of the sloop, was coiled in such a way that it would easily pay out as the boat ran off before the stiff breeze.

As soon as all was in readiness the head of the Sea Witch was brought round before the wind and her full sails spread. Away she went like an arrow, and the rope uncoiled with a swiftness that made the lads brace themselves for the shock they knew would immediately come. But it was not so much of a shock as they had anticipated. The rope suddenly stiffened, there was a quick jerk, and then the sloop kept on her course, her speed somewhat diminished by the load she was evidently towing behind her.

"We have started them," the boys cried simultaneously; and then Judd, who was at the helm, brought the sloop around on her downward tack.

With no apparent difficulty the Sea Witch dragged her load, and skirting the shore, she was

run down until nearly opposite the smaller hummock. Then the was anchored, and with the yawl the lads completed the work of landing the undergear. Then they dragged the wheels up to the cart-bed, and the long-separated parts were once more united.

"Now," said Budd, as he gazed at the restored vehicle, "I believe I will go up to the next farm and get a yoke of oxen, and surprise Mr. Benton by bringing it home. That will end the business, and I shall have a great load off my mind."

"While you go up for the oxen, I'll take the sloop back to the island and return in the yawl," said Judd. "I want to go with you and hear what the old man will say."

Budd got the oxen and yoked them to the tongue. The iron pin that he had so hastily pulled out at the time he had been swept away was gone, and he was obliged to make a wooden one before he could secure the yoke. He had barely got it done when Judd returned, and they drove off for Mr. Benton's.

They found him at home, on their arrival, and he came quickly out to see his long-lost cart. The rays of the sun had nearly dried its exterior, and it scarcely looked the worse for its hard usage. Over and over the man examined the vehicle, but said not a word until Budd took off the oxen. Then his eye caught sight of the wooden tongue-pin, and he asked, sharply:

"Where's the iron pin that was in there when you lost the cart?"

"On the sea-bottom, I suppose," answered Budd. "You didn't expect me to hang on to it, did you?"

"No," said the man, slowly, "but I should 'a' thought ye'd 'a' got me another."

"How much will one cost?" asked Budd, in disgust.

"As much as a quarter," replied Mr. Benton.

"Here it is," said Budd, handing that amount to him, "and I hope you are now satisfied?"

"Yes, unless" — rather hesitatingly — "unless ye've a mind to pay me fer the time it has been gone."

"I won't pay you a single cent for it! I haven't used your cart!" responded Budd, out of all patience.

The lads then turned and left the man, who had in no way thanked them for restoring his cart, nor seemed to appreciate the toil they had undergone for its restoration.

It was night before the boys had returned the borrowed oxen to their owner, paid for their use, and reached their boat. Almost out of patience with themselves for having neglected some of their own work to render a favor to an ungrateful man, they embarked and rowed rapidly for the island. Reaching the wharf a few minutes later, they secured the boat and started for the house. Suddenly Judd caught his companion's arm, saying:

"What light is that?"

Only a few rods off shore, and coming directly for the island, was a light. Soon it was near enough for

the lads to distinguish, even in the darkness, a boat containing three men, one of whom was in the bow, and held a lighted lantern in his hand. As the boat reached the shore they heard this man distinctly saying:

"This is the island, and the house is a few rods in that direction. We'll find a good shelter for the night, and may perhaps find it worth our while to keep quietly here for some time."

Budd drew his chum back into the shadow of an adjacent tree and whispered:

"Let us find out who they are before me make ourselves known."

Then the two lads crept carefully along the western shore of the island until opposite the house; then they crossed their garden-patch and concealed themselves behind the huge wood-pile, waiting for the new-comers to approach, and wondering what purpose had brought them to the island.

CHAPTER IX.

THE THREE INTRUDERS.

THE LADS did not have long to wait. Scarcely had they recovered breath from their rapid running when the three intruders appeared. The one in advance carried the lantern, and all carried gripsacks.

"They have come to stay," whispered Budd.

Then he asked, softly:

"Are the doors locked, Judd?"

"Yes, and windows fastened," was the answer, given in the same low whisper. "I fortunately attended to that when I came over with the sloop."

The men reached the house and tried the kitchen door, but it withstood their most vigorous blows.

"I don't understand this," remarked the man with the lantern. "You could get in easily enough when I was over here early in the spring."

"Perhaps some one is living here now," suggested one of his companions, cautiously. "There is a wood-pile just beyond the corner."

"So there is," assented the first speaker, holding up his lantern so that its rays fell on the heap; "but if there is anyone here, I should have thought our knocking would have aroused him."

"It may be some fisherman who has not yet come home," remarked the third man.

"We'll try a window," said the leader; and he stepped to the one just at the left of the door.

"It is also fastened," he added, after trying it, "but it is with a stick just above it. Tom, hand me your cutter, and I'll take out a glass and remove the stick."

The man addressed opened his gripsack. For a moment the listening lads heard the ring of metallic tools striking together; then the searcher seemed to find what he wanted, and handed his companion the instrument he had asked for.

There was now heard for an instant a sharp scratching sound, followed by a jingle of glass, and then the window was raised up.

"We can get in now," remarked the one who had opened the window; and tossing in his gripsack, he sprung in after it, followed by his companions.

Budd and his partner rose and crept under the window, listening eagerly yet apprehensively for the next words the men should speak, for they now suspected the character of their visitors, and knew it would go hard with them if they were discovered.

"Some one does live here, boys, sure enough. These things weren't here at all a few months ago," said the leader, a moment later.

"Well, whoever they are, evidently they are not here just now, and we'll look around. Perhaps we'll find something worth taking, even if we have to leave," said the man who had been called Tom.

As his voice reached the listening boys, Budd caught Judd's arm convulsively.

"I believe I know that man," he whispered into his astonished comrade's ear.

"All right," was the response of the other men to Tom's suggestion, and they passed on into the sitting-room.

Budd nudged his chum, crept around to the east end of the house, and stood up by the sitting-room window. The curtain was lowered, but not quite far enough to reach the sill, and through this narrow opening he gave a quick look at the three men. Then he pulled Judd, who had followed him, back into the shadow of the building and said, hoarsely:

"It is as I thought. The man they call Tom is Thomas H. Bagsley, who worked in the same office with my father for several years, and he is as big a rascal as there is outside of prison-walls. If I only had him in my power I'd wring a confession out of him that would change my whole future life;" and there was a bitterness in the lad's words that was akin to hatred.

As though to substantiate Budd's declaration, a singular thing happened within the house. There came a sharp exclamation that led the boys to again look through the window into the room. The man called Tom stood by the center-table, with Budd's Bible open in his hand, staring at the fly-leaf, and it was he from whom the exclamation had come.

"What's the matter?" asked his companions.

"I want you to read that name," he said savagely to them; and looking over his shoulder they read:

"Budd Boyd. From his mother, Mary Boyd."

"Well, what of it?" asked one of the men.

"He's the son of Henry Boyd," answered Tom, shrilly. "I knew he'd left Boston, but didn't suppose he had come down this way. We'd better leave before he gets his eyes on me."

"Why?" asked the same man who had spoken before.

"Because," answered the leader of the trio, "Tom played a little trick that sent the father to prison, where he is to-day, and he is afraid the son will take revenge on him should he catch sight of him."

Tom swore a fearful oath.

"Not if I know myself," he replied, fiercely. "Let me see the son, and I'll serve him worse than the father. All I fear is he may see me and recognize me; then the little job we contemplate will have to be given over. He'd set the authorities to watching us, and the sooner we got out the neighborhood the better."

"Hadn't we better keep watch here till the lad returns, and then drop him off the island?" suggested the leader, coolly.

"Yes, if we were sure he was alone," answered Tom, readily. "But I don't believe he is. Likely as not there is a family living here, and they may have gone over to one of the villages for something, and when the moon is up will return. Before that time we must be gone."

"Well, perhaps you are right," the leader answered. "We can row over to Hope Island and make a stay there over Sunday, or until we have formed our plans. I believe there is no one there as yet."

"That is old Johnson's summer residence, isn't it?" asked Tom.

"Yes. Are you afraid of him, too?"

"No more than I am of the boy. In fact, I'd like to ransack the house over there, if the way is clear to do so."

"All right; we'll go over there pretty soon, then. But let us first see what there is for us here. Jed had better run down by the boat, however, and keep watch, while you and I pick up the things."

Jed departed, at his leader's suggestion, and the two lads deemed it wise for them to keep out of his way, and so worked cautiously back to the west side of the island, where they could embark upon their boat at the first evidence of their being discovered by the intruders.

As they sat down near the wharf Judd said, in low tones:

"I wish we had some way to scare those fellows off before they make a very extended search of the house. I'm afraid they may find our money."

Before Budd could answer there was a sound of steps coming down the path toward the wharf. It was evidently one of the robbers, but he came only a short distance.

"Jed! Jed!" he called in low but distinct tones.

"We have found just the jolliest supper! Come on up and help us eat it."

Jed, who was down by his boat, immediately joined the speaker, and the two went hurriedly back to the house.

"I wish we had something to eat, too," commented Judd, as the two men disappeared. "I confess, after working as we did this afternoon, I'm hungry."

"We'll have something in a few minutes, and those fellows will leave the house a good deal quicker than they got into it—see if they don't," answered Budd. "You just stay right here a few minutes;" and then he ran down the wharf, jumped into the yawl, and sculled quietly over to the sloop.

It was not over five minutes before he returned with an old gun, that had belonged to Judd's father, and which the boys kept on the sloop, having an occasional use for it, as they went about the bay, to shoot sea-fowl with, or the more voracious denizens of the sea.

"Come on!" he said to Judd; and again the boys approached the house.

Taking their station once more behind the woodpile, Budd called out, in stern tones:

"Hello, Judd! There is some one in the house! Hurry up with the gun!"

A great commotion in the house instantly followed his words. The robbers evidently were at the kitchen-table eating when he cried out, and each grabbing up his gripsack, sprung for the window.

As they tumbled, one over the other, out onto the ground, Budd raised the gun and fired one barrel into the air.

Not a sound save that of running followed the report, and it was apparent that the intruders were making the best time possible for their boat. The two boys followed them to the shore, and Budd again fired into the air as the light craft swiftly disappeared in the darkness—not, however, until there had been two or three quick flashes from the boat, followed by sharp reports, and some pistol-balls had whistled harmlessly above the lads' heads.

Hurrying back to the house, the boys made a careful examination of their rooms. In the bedroom and sitting-room nothing had been disturbed; and in the kitchen the broken window, the lighted lantern, and the partially-eaten food upon the table, were the only evidences of the robbers' visit.

Somewhat excited, and very watchful lest the intruders should return, the boys ate their long-delayed supper, and then entered the sitting-room. Budd sat down by the center-table and took up the Bible that had caused the robber Tom so much surprise. His face flushed greatly, and he seemed deeply moved by the emotions with which he was struggling. At length he said:

"Judd, you heard enough from Thomas Bagsley's lips to-night to prove he was the man I had declared him to be. You also heard him allude to my father. In justice to that father's memory, and also that you may know who I am and how I came to be here, I

will now tell you what I have never before disclosed to a single person."

With these words Budd began a story which explained the mystery that had hung over him ever since he had appeared in that neighborhood, and revealed the tremendous burden that was weighing down his young life.

CHAPTER X.

BUDD'S STORY.

SAID HE, "My father's name is Henry Boyd, and my mother's, Mary Boyd, and my home until last March was in Boston, Mass. Father and mother had been brought up in the western part of that State, and were married there, but soon after my birth they removed to Boston, and father entered the store of N. B. Johnson, the wholesale dry goods dealer on Sumner Street."

"He's the man who has spent the last summer or two on Hope Island," interrupted Judd, "and the one Bagsley called old Johnson."

"Yes," assented Budd; "though I did not know, until he alluded to it to-night, that it was down this way that Mr. Johnson spent his summers.

"To go on with my story, however. Father slowly worked his way up from one position to another until he was Mr. Johnson's confidential clerk, and held that position until last fall. Of course his salary was a comfortable one, and we lived nicely out in the Roxbury suburbs. I was kept constantly in school, and as I seemed interested in my studies father determined that I should have a college edu-

cation, and with that aim in view I last September entered the Boston Latin School.

"How little we know what is before us," continued Budd after a momentary pause. "Had anyone then told me what I was to pass through in less than a year I should have thought it simply impossible. In order to have you understand what is to follow I must, however, go back a little in my explanation.

"When I was about twelve years old, mother began to show signs of a decline. She had had a fever, and never fully recovered. Still, as she was able to be around most of the time and direct our one servant in the care of the house, I, at least, thought but little about it. Not so with father, however. Always thoughtful of others rather than of himself, he watched mother with an ever-increasing anxiety until a year ago last spring. Mother then contracted a severe cold, and it was soon only too apparent that she had entered the first stages of a quick consumption.

"All that summer she grew worse, and last October she was so feeble her physician declared that the only hope of saving her life was to take her immediately to a warmer climate for the winter. Father determined that this should be done, but how he was to accomplish it he did not know. Mother was too feeble to go without him and a woman attendant. The fall drive at the store had begun, and father could not well be spared. Then, too, there was the expense that would necessarily

follow. This was an important item; for though father had always had good pay, he had, on account of his heavy expenses, saved scarcely anything.

"Father spoke to Mr. Johnson about a leave of absence, and he reluctantly consented that father should be gone long enough to take mother to Florida and arrange for her comfort there. The woman who was taking care of her consented to go and stay there with her; and much as father and mother hated to be separated, this seemed the only thing that could be done. Father had about two hundred dollars on hand, and deemed this enough to meet the expenses of taking mother down to Deland, the place where they had decided to go. He then intended to send mother money each month, or as it should be needed.

"So our house was given up. The goods were stored. A boarding-place was secured for me, and on the first of the next week father and mother were to start. I shall never forget that last evening we all spent together," and Budd's voice grew husky. "It was at a friend's of the family, where mother had been temporarily removed while the household goods were being packed and stored. We were alone in mother's room, and it almost seems as if mother knew she should never see me again, except for the brief moment I should say good-by to her at the depot the following morning. So she told me her last wishes, and gave me her blessing.

"While we sat there a knock came at the door, and mother's nurse entered.

"'Here, Mr. Boyd,' she said, 'is a letter for you. It has just been left at the door.'

"Father took it, and noticing the firm-name on the corner of the envelope, tore it open with some misgiving. It proved, however, to be a great cause for rejoicing to us all, and no one dreamed that it was otherwise than authentic. Written on the regular firm note-paper, and with the firm-heading, it ran:

BOSTON, Mass., Oct. 15, 18—.

MR. HENRY BOYD:

Dear Sir—Possibly my reluctance to allow you a leave of absence may have led you to believe I do not sympathize with you in your wife's illness; but as a proof that I do, and also as a token of my appreciation of your long and faithful service, I inclose a check for five hundred ($500) dollars. Trusting you will return to us at the earliest possible moment, and that your wife's sojourn in a warmer climate may completely restore her to health,

I remain, yours truly,

N. B. JOHNSON.

"Now, father had seen more or less of Mr. Johnson's writing every day for years, and the quaint, cramped penmanship of the letter, with the familiar signature at the close, seemed identically those that were also upon the check. That was the regular firm-check also, and the number and perforation were in strict accordance with the firm-usages, and therefore father, with a grateful heart, wrote a note of thanks, and gave it to me to mail to Mr. Johnson

as I went back to my boarding-place. With joyful hearts, too—joyful in spite of mother's feebleness—father and mother set out at an early hour the next morning for the South. They had taken this unexpected generosity of Mr. Johnson as a good omen, and neither had any suspicion that a cloud was gathering above their heads that would soon mean death to one and an incarceration in prison-walls for the other.

"In New York father was known, and he thought it wiser to cash his check there than wait until he got farther South; so the next morning he delayed one train, and at the opening of the bank where he was acquainted presented his check for payment. The money was handed him without any hesitation, and two hours later he, with his little party, had resumed the journey.

"At Richmond, Charleston and Jacksonville they made brief stops, that mother might rest, and it was not until the following week that they arrived at their destination. Imagine, now, father's surprise, when he registered at the hotel in Deland, to have an officer immediately step forward and arrest him for forgery and theft. As soon as father recovered his composure he demanded a full explanation of the outrage, and at whose instigation the charges had been made. He was completely overwhelmed when told that it was Mr. Johnson, and that he was charged not only with the forging of the check, but also with taking a thousand dollars in cash from the office safe.

"Father sent for a lawyer and consulted with him, hoping to arrange the affair in some way so that mother would have no knowledge of it, and having arranged for her comfort, he would then return to Boston and face the charges, sure that he could prove them false. But father was a stranger. No one was ready to offer bail for him, and the officer clamored for his immediate requisition. There seemed but one alternative. Mother must be told, and father return immediately to Boston.

"When mother was told, the shock seemed to give her new strength, and she declared she would not leave father while he was in trouble. The whole party started on their return, therefore, with the officer. In New York mother was taken with a hemorrhage, brought on, the doctors said, by excitement and overdoing, and in six hours she was a corpse.

"I saw the account of father's arrest in that morning's paper, and a few hours later got a telegram from father announcing mother's death, and that night met him at the depot and took charge of the corpse, while the officer took father to jail.

"The weeks that followed I cannot tell you of," continued Budd, after a paroxysm of sobs. Mother was buried, and father's trial came. Some friends had rallied about him, good counsel was secured, and we hoped confidently for his acquittal. Father told his story just as it was, but Mr. Johnson declared he never either wrote the letter or sent the check; and Bagsley, who had been an under-clerk in the

office, and had succeeded to father's position, produced bits of paper that he declared he had found hid in the office, on which there had evidently been constant practice to imitate the firm-name. This testimony, together with the known facts that father needed the money, and was the only clerk in the office that at that time had access to the safe and check-book, convicted him. His story, and the drawing of the check and the sending of it to the house, were declared to be simply plans on his part to cover his crimes in mother's and his friends' eyes, and account to them for the extra money he possessed, until he got safely out of the State. The thousand dollars that had disappeared from the safe he was supposed to have concealed. At the end, those who had claimed to be friends deserted him, and Mr. Johnson was openly complimented on the promptness with which he had acted. The Judge who presided at the trial seemed to have caught the popular belief, for he, when pronouncing the sentences, said :

"'Had the prisoner confessed his guilt and thrown himself upon the mercy of the Court, he might have received the Court's clemency, since they were his first offenses. His obdurateness, however, compels me to make the sentences correspondingly harsh. I therefore sentence him on the first charge to seven years, and on the second charge to five years, at hard labor in the State's prison; the second sentence to begin when the first has ended.'

"It was last January when this took place. From

that time I knew not a happy hour until I left the city. Our former friends refused to receive me at their homes; school-mates treated me coldly or met me with sneers; even the lady with whom I boarded told me I must leave. I at length determined to seek a home where I was not known.

"The lawyer who had defended father at his trial seemed friendly, and to him I went. From him I learned that father had returned to Mr. Johnson the five hundred dollars he had got on the forged check, and that he had told Mr. Johnson if he ever lived to get out of prison he should pay the other thousand. 'You believe I have taken it,' he had said, 'and I will not allow myself to rest until you at least are convinced that I have not a cent that belongs to you.' The lawyer also added that father's own money had paid the expenses South and return, and also mother's funeral expenses, but that he had received no compensation for his services.

"Through him I therefore disposed of all the household goods, selling even my own, father's and mother's watches; in fact, everything that would sell. After paying the lawyer in full, and all other bills, I found I had five hundred and four dollars and seventy-five cents.

"I took five hundred of this and went to Mr. Johnson's office. He was not in, and I sat down to await his coming. Bagsley was at the desk father had occupied so long, and he scowled darkly at me. I had always felt that he could tell all about the forged check and the thousand dollars if he were

willing to do so, and I fixed my eyes steadily upon him. He grew uneasy at my fixed gaze, and evidently would have spoken to me had not the presence of the other clerks prevented.

"Mr. Johnson soon came in, and though he seemed annoyed to see me, did not refuse my request to see him privately. Once in his inner office, I took out the money I had brought and handed it to him.

"'I pay this money, Mr. Johnson,' I said, 'not because father ever took a dollar from you, but because you believe he did. This five hundred makes an even thousand. The other five hundred I will pay as soon as I can earn it. Will you give me a receipt for this?'

Without a word he filled out the receipt, but on handing it to me he said, not unkindly:

"'Will you tell me who did take it? If I knew I had wronged your father I would not leave a stone unturned until I had made him full amends.'

"'Of course I have my suspicions,' I replied, 'but it is another thing to prove them.'

"'Do you mean Bagsley?' he asked, lowering his voice and tapping thoughtfully on the desk with his fingers.

"'Mr. Johnson,' I suddenly cried, a light flashing in upon my mind, 'did you, the morning father started South, get a note from him thanking you for the check?' and as he shook his head in reply, I went on: 'Well, the night before, I mailed one to you. Who opened your mail that morning?'

"'Bagsley,' he replied; 'but how did he get access to the safe, and what could have been his motive in so cruelly wronging your father, if guilty?'

"'I don't know any more than you,' I answered, turning to go. As I laid my hand upon the office door it opened, and Bagsley appeared. By the look of rage on his face as he glanced at me I knew he had been listening to our conversation. He walked over to Mr. Johnson with a handful of papers he wanted him to sign, and I departed.

"Going back to the place where I was stopping, I remained all night, and early the next morning took my pack and started out of the city. I had so little money I had decided to walk to Providence, looking for work all the way. Barely had I turned the first street corner when I ran into Bagsley. He at once recognized me, and catching me by the arm, hissed out the words:

"'You young rascal! I've a good mind to throttle you; and I will if you ever come about the office again telling stories about me!' Then he shook me and hurled me from him with a force that sent me into the nearest gutter.

"Thoroughly angered by the treatment I had received, I sprung to my feet and foolishly said:

"'Bagsley, it was you who forged that check and sent it to father to cover your theft of the thousand dollars, and I'll prove it yet!'

"He came toward me, his eyes flashing with a murderous light and his fists clinched. I expected

an encounter with him that would only end in serious injury to one or the other of us, and braced myself for it. But just then he caught sight of a gentleman coming down the street, and shaking his fist in my face, he muttered:

"'The next time I meet you I'll kill you!' and then he turned the corner and disappeared.

"I now know by his words here to-night that he has been looking for me, and thus found out that I had left the city. His presence here indicates also that he has been discharged for some reason from Mr. Johnson's employ, and is allied with a gang of burglars. This only strengthens my belief that he is guilty of the crimes for which my father is now in prison.

"As to my tramp, it was a long and severe one. I reached Providence finally without money and no prospect of work. Every effort there to secure a job failed, and I continued my tramp. In the village over here I heard of Benton, and that he wanted a lad about my age. It was cold, a storm threatened, I was hungry, and had nowhere to lay my head. His offer I was at the time thankful to accept, and began my work for him."

"Does your father know where you are?" asked Judd, as his partner finished and bowed his head upon the table to conceal the emotions the narrating of his story had awakened.

"I went to see him before I paid Mr. Johnson," Budd replied without raising his head, "and had his approval of my course. After I hired out to Mr.

Benton I sent a brief line to him explaining that I had found work. I did not give my address, for I was afraid if I got a letter from the prison my story might come out, and I should have to seek a home in some other place. I tell you, Judd, it's a heavy burden I carry—one that will blight my whole life, and that has already, as you see, changed my whole future."

"Yes, Budd, I know it," replied his companion; "and yet you know, and your father knows, he is innocent, while I know my father is everything that the people of this community may care to call him. Your mother was confident of your father's innocence, and died before she knew of his imprisonment, while my mother all her married life had the burden of knowing she was married to a brute. Surely there is much yet for you to be thankful for, and perhaps Bagsley's presence here means that you are yet to prove his guilt and set your father free. Some light has been thrown on the matter by this incident of to-night."

"You are right, Judd, and I will take heart at your words. The darkest hour seems to have passed, and light has begun to come. I am pleasantly situated, and can soon send Mr. Johnson a payment on the last five hundred dollars. In some way, too, Bagsley may be led to confess the part he has played, and then father can go free, and here I'll have a home to which he can come until we plan for the future. But whatever comes, and whatever plans are made, there will always be a place for

you. Brief as the time has been since I knew you, I love you like a brother."

"We will be brothers," Judd declared. "Through thick and thin we'll stand by each other;" and with a hearty shake of the hands the lads went to bed, and were soon asleep.

And neither one for a single moment supposed that before the coming week was over a darker cloud and a heavier burden would fall upon Budd's heart, and that Judd's declaration would have a severe test.

CHAPTER XI.

AN UNFORTUNATE PREDICAMENT.

THE YOUNG partners on the following day talked over the adventure they had had with the burglars, and decided to say nothing about the affair to any one else for the present.

"Those fellows are up to some crime," Budd had declared, "and possibly, if we say nothing about their visit here, but keep a careful watch up and down the bay, we may discover what it is and bring them to justice.

"Once get Bagsley into jail charged with some crime, and he may be willing to acknowledge his guilt respecting the one of which my father has been convicted. Especially may this be so if he should be able to lighten his sentence on the later charge by a confession of the first; and if we are the means of his and his companions' arrest, we may have the power to bring about such an arrangement. Then my father's release is certain."

To all of which Judd agreed, and from that day the lads became a self-appointed vigilance committee patrolling the bay.

On both the following Monday and Tuesday mornings, when the lads came to haul their nets at

the three pounds, they were delighted to find in each the largest catches of fish they had yet made; and it was nearly dark on Tuesday evening as they got into their sloop at the village wharf, after shipping off the large excess of fish they had had over the demand of the home trade.

As Budd cast off the last rope and stepped forward to hoist the sails of the Sea Witch, preparatory to a departure for the island, a gentleman came hurriedly to the dock and called out:

"Hello, there, boys; hold on a moment. I want to see you!"

Judd threw the man a rope, and the sloop was refastened to the wharf.

"Are you Boyd & Floyd of Fox Island?" the stranger asked.

"Yes, sir," replied the lads.

"And you sometimes take out sailing-parties, do you not?" was the next inquiry; and again the young partners responded in the affirmative.

"I am Mr. Dane," continued the gentleman, "and am over here with a party of friends, and we wish you to take us across the bay to Bristol to-morrow. Can you do it?"

"Do you wish to be simply taken over, or over and back?" asked Budd, as spokesman for the firm.

"Just landed there. We are from that side, and thought, instead of going around by either Newport or Providence, we would get you to set us over," explained Mr. Dane.

"What time do you wish to go, and how many

are there in the party?" asked Budd, with a prompt business air.

"Six, with myself; and we would prefer not to go until afternoon, leaving here, say, about two o'clock."

Budd consulted with his partner; then he said:

"Yes, we can take you over."

"What are the charges?" inquired Mr. Dane, as though the proposed trip depended greatly upon them.

"Three dollars for the party," answered Budd.

"That is fifty cents each, and is much less than it will cost us to go around," Mr. Dane commented to himself.

Then he said to the boys:

"All right; we'll give it."

"One of us will be here at the appointed hour, if a suitable day for the trip," said Budd, casting off the fastenings of the sloop for the second time; and a moment later she was gliding down the harbor.

By half-past one o'clock the next day the lads had got their regular work so well in hand that Judd could easily finish the balance by night, and Budd entered the Sea Witch and sailed over to the village.

The weather was delightful, and the breeze a strong one, so he tied up at the village wharf five minutes before the appointed hour. But the party he was to take over the bay was as prompt as himself, and before the town clock had struck two all were on board, and the sloop had begun the passage.

The wind was a southerly one, and running out by the lighthouse, Budd took his first tack directly for the lower end of Prudence Island. When he reached that, and threw around his tiller for his second tack, it brought the wind almost directly astern, and he ran straight for Bristol harbor, where he safely landed his passengers in less than two hours.

The party were delighted with the trip, and promptly paid the amount that had been agreed upon. As they turned away from the landing, Mr. Dane handed Budd one of his business cards, saying:

"You see, I'm in the grocery business just up the street here. Whenever over this way, give us a call."

Budd thanked the gentleman and put the card in his pocket, scarcely realizing how soon it was to prove serviceable. Then he said, laughingly:

"We are in want of some groceries at the island. I guess I'll go up to your store, and see if I can trade better there than at our village. It will enable me, also, to go directly home from here."

"Come on; I go by there on my way to the house, and will see that you are fairly treated," said Mr. Dane, in reply.

A few rods up the street they came to the store, and Mr. Dane himself waited upon Budd, and made a generous reduction, as the lad paid for the things.

Returning to the boat as soon as his purchases were made, Budd cast off the lines and began his

return passage. The wind, blowing as it did strongly from a southern quarter, compelled him to take quite a different course from the one taken when he had come over.

Once out of Mount Hope Bay, he ran for the north of Prudence Island. Passing that on his left, he tacked down by Patience Island toward the mouth of the Potowomot River, on the main shore. His third tack, to the southeast, brought him under the lee of Hope Island, and from there he expected to make his last tack directly for home.

As he came up under Hope Island, however, he recalled the words of Tom Bagsley on the previous Saturday evening about this island being Mr. Johnson's summer residence; and remembering, also, that Tom and his companions had left Fox Island intending to make Hope Island their rendezvous for a few days, a strong desire took possession of him to land on the island and see if the burglars were still there, or had ransacked the house and left.

Like an inspiration the thought came to him that here might be his chance to bring a charge against his enemy. If the house had indeed been robbed, his own and Judd's testimony as to the declaration they had heard from the robbers' lips surely ought to be sufficient to warrant their arrest for the deed. He resolved, then, to land and make an investigation; and if he found traces of the crime, as he felt sure he would, then he would report to Mr. Johnson at once.

He knew he was running some danger of dis-

covery by a man who would not hesitate to take his life, but he believed the risk was very slight. If the house had been robbed, he argued, then the men had already departed. He believed this all the more strongly because it was quite time for Mr. Johnson to come to the island for the summer; and the men, also knowing this, would not be apt to make a long sojourn there. So he ran in as close to the island as possible and anchored the sloop. Then, jumping into the yawl, he went on shore, and climbing up the steep bank, started boldly across the fields toward the house.

He would have hesitated long before doing this, however, had he been aware that Mr. Johnson had only that morning come to the island, bringing some men with him, to arrange for his summer sojourn; and finding that the house had indeed been robbed, and believing, from unmistakable evidences, that a gang of men were making the house a place of rendezvous, he had left everything just as it had been found, and was lying in wait with his men for the burglars' return.

Unconscious of all this, Budd went directly on to the house, and found the shutters torn off from one window and the window open. Listening a moment, and hearing no sound of anyone within the house, he leaped into the window and began his search of the rooms.

On every side were the signs of the robbers' presence. The table was covered with unwashed dishes, beds had been slept in, and drawers and closets torn

open. Budd of course could not tell what had been carried off, but he felt sure that many things had been taken.

From down-stairs he went upstairs, and wandered through room after room until convinced that the burglars had left no part of the house unvisited; then he retraced his steps to the window by which he had entered.

Exulting in his heart at the discovery he had made, for he believed it was one link in the chain toward his father's freedom, and utterly unconscious of any danger to himself, he put his feet out of the window and lowered himself to the ground.

Then he heard hurried steps behind him, and a loud shout close at hand; but before he could turn about and face the unseen danger strong hands seized him and a stern voice said:

"So it is you, you young rascal, that has been robbing me, and this is the place you have got, but cannot send me any money until fall! Not until you sell the articles you have stolen, I suppose!"

Full of consternation, and wondering how he could explain the awkward predicament in which he found himself, Budd turned and stood face to face with Mr. Johnson.

CHAPTER XII.

BUDD'S TRIAL.

FOR A moment Budd stood before the angry man abashed, and not knowing what to say. Then the consciousness of his innocence of any wrong came to his rescue, and he quietly said:

"Mr. Johnson, I have not robbed your house, nor have I ever been on the island before to-day. If you will permit me to explain, I will tell you how I came to be here."

"None of your lies to me!" angrily answered Mr. Johnson. "Your father tried that when he robbed me, and now you want to make use of the same trick! But whatever story you have got to tell you may tell in the court-room, as he did; and, like him, you'll find it won't save you from prison-walls;" and he checked every effort of Budd to speak.

"Bring a rope here," he said to one of his men, "and bind this fellow's arms behind his back, and get ready to go with me over to the west shore. I shall want your testimony to corroborate mine, that we found the young rascal in the house. The rest of you can now put the house in order."

"How shall we go over to the main-land?" asked the man, after he had finished tying Budd's arms.

"We'll go in the prisoner's boat," replied Mr. Johnson, "and Bill, here, can come over after us to-morrow noon. We can't swear out a warrant and have the boy tried before that time."

With Budd between them, the two men now proceeded down to the shore where the yawl was lying, and pushing her off, went on board the sloop.

Scarcely had Mr. Johnson got on board the Sea Witch, however, when he noticed the bundles Budd had put on board at Bristol, and he directed his man to examine them.

"They contain a ham, some crackers, cheese and sugar," he reported.

"There is another proof of your guilt!" said Mr. Johnson, sternly, to Budd. "You had brought along your provisions for another sojourn at the house."

"Then why did I not carry them up there?" retorted Budd.

Mr. Johnson was at first puzzled for an answer, but at length said:

"You must have had accomplices, and it may be you only stopped at the house while on your way to your present rendezvous to see what else you could find."

"But I had nothing when I got out of the window," replied Budd.

Then he added, earnestly:

"If you will just let me explain, Mr. Johnson, you will see that I had good reason for being on your island."

"Very likely," said Mr. Johnson, with a sarcasm that stung the lad to the quick. But there is just one chance I'll give you. If you will tell where the rest of your gang is, and help us to capture them, I'll do my best to save you; otherwise the law must take its course."

"How can I, when I have no accomplices and have not robbed you?" asked Budd, out of patience with the obstinacy of the angry man.

"The saying that 'A lie well stuck to is as good as the truth' won't apply in your case, at least," remarked Mr. Johnson, with rising anger; and for the remainder of the passage he in no way addressed his prisoner.

Arriving at the village which Budd had left only five hours before under such happy circumstances, Mr. Johnson left him on the boat, with the hired man to look out for him, while he went in search of the proper authorities to perfect the lad's arrest. He had no difficulty in finding the officers, and at eight o'clock Budd had been put into the village lock-up, with his preliminary trial before the local justice assigned for ten o'clock the next day.

But Budd was in no sense desponding; his head was never clearer, nor had he ever thought more rapidly or planned better to meet a grave emergency. He was growing older and wiser very fast. He knew, moreover, what were his rights.

"Mr. Avery," he had said to the constable, as he was about to leave him for the night, "I want Mr. John Benton and Peter Wright subpœnaed to ap-

pear as witnesses for me in the morning. I also want a messenger sent over to Fox Island for Judd Floyd. Mr. Ben Taylor will go, and my boat, as you know, is at the wharf. Please hurry this part of my request, for I have got to send Judd over to Bristol before my trial. Of course I will pay all necessary expenses."

Mr. Avery promised to attend to these matters, and evidently did so at once, for at nine o'clock he appeared again with Judd Floyd, and also announced that the two witnesses named had had due notice to appear at the trial.

As soon as Judd and he were left alone Budd took Mr. Dane's card from his pocket, and asked his chum if he would go over to Bristol for that gentleman and bring him over as a witness.

"I shall prove," he said, "that I have never been on Hope Island before this afternoon, and that will clear me from the charge brought against me; for Mr. Johnson has not put into his warrant that I robbed the house to-day, as he knew such a charge could not be sustained, but that I committed the burglary some time between the 1st of April (when he was last on there) and to-day.

"I shall, of course, depend upon you as the principal witness as to my residing on Fox Island.

"Mr. Wright and Mr. Benton can testify as to where I was previous to my joining you, and Mr. Dane can testify that I did not go to Hope Island while with him; that I bought my provisions there for our use on Fox Island; and that I did not leave

there until after four o'clock to-day. Perhaps it is not really necessary to have Mr. Dane's testimony, but I had rather he would be here, and you can tell him that I will pay his expenses, and also pay him for his time."

"I'll bring him back, sure," promised Judd, rising to go.

Then he drew near to Budd and whispered:

"Shall you allude to the visit of Bagsley and his gang to Fox Island, and what they said about Hope Island? That will be an important item, but it will give them the clew we are trying to follow up."

"No, it won't be necessary to mention that. At the worst they can only bind me over to a higher court, and before that trial can come off I believe we shall have found Bagsley, and that will clear me. I don't see how, after I have proved I was never on the island before to-day, they can hold me a single moment."

Judd held the same opinion, and hurried off to carry out his partner's request.

At ten o'clock the next morning the little village court-room was crowded, for criminal trials were a novelty then, and Budd's case had awakened a good deal of curiosity.

The Trial Justice was a little, fussy man, knowing far more about his grocery store down the street than he did about law; but he had put on a pompous air, and tried to manifest a dignity equal to the important occasion.

Mr. Johnson and man were there, and with them

the one lawyer the village afforded as Prosecuting Attorney. It looked as though Mr. Johnson was afraid he could not prove his case, and had sought all the possible help he at that short notice could obtain.

Budd's witnesses were all there also, Judd and Mr. Dane having arrived an hour before, and Mr. Benton and Mr. Wright having come in as the court was called.

Budd was his own lawyer, and from his smiling face one would have thought he felt fully able to cope with the attorney for the prosecution.

When the charge was read, the lad in loud, clear tones, answered "Not guilty," and the trial began.

Mr. Johnson was the first witness, and he stated briefly the condition in which he had found his house on arriving there the morning before, and how he had laid in wait for the return of the burglars. He described Budd's appearance, his entrance to the house, and his capture. As he ended his testimony, the lawyer, evidently having been previously instructed, asked:

"Have you ever seen the prisoner previous to the time of his capture?"

"Yes," replied Mr. Johnson. "I have known him, and his father before him, for years."

"Where is his father?" asked the lawyer.

"I object to that question," cried Budd, jumping to his feet, his cheeks all aflame with indignation.

Before the Justice could give his ruling the answer had been given, loud and clear:

"In the Massachusetts State Prison, serving out a twelve years' sentence for forgery and theft."

Budd sunk back in his chair sick at heart, and almost in despair. The mischief had been done, and the crowd knew the dread secret he had so long hid within his own bosom. He felt for a moment that he would have been glad to have had the prison-walls close around him, too, shutting him from the gaze of all eyes.

Nor was the answer lost in its influence on the Justice.

"I think," he said, slowly, "that anything that throws light on the prisoner's previous life or training will be in order here. It will help the Court to decide whether he would have been likely to commit the crime with which he is charged;" and the man tried to conceal the curiosity which was already beaming from his face.

Without further interruption Mr. Johnson told his side of the story, with which the reader is already familiar, and left the stand, having given Justice and audience alike the impression that Mr. Boyd was a most hardened criminal, and that the son was already following in his father's footsteps.

His hired man then took the stand, and corroborated his employer's testimony respecting the burglary and the capture of the prisoner. Then the prosecution rested its case.

While Mr. Johnson was telling about Budd's father the lad sat with head bowed, and appeared

to no longer care what became of himself; but just before the hired man finished his testimony Judd leaned over and whispered in his comrade's ear:

"For your father's sake, make a defense."

He could not have whispered more effective words. Budd at once raised his head and proudly faced the Court, and when the prosecution had done he rose quickly to his feet.

"The charge with which I am accused," he said, taking the paper up, "reads that I entered Mr. Johnson's house some time between April 1st and yesterday, June 20th. It does not specify any charge for yesterday at all, as I forced no entrance into the house, nor took anything away. I shall, then, prove to this Court that previous to yesterday I had never been upon Hope Island. I will also tell why I went there."

With these words he called Mr. Benton as his first witness. Mr. Wright followed, and then Judd Floyd and Mr. Dane came in the order named.

All swore positively that if the prisoner had been upon Hope Island during the specific time each was called to testify to, they would certainly have known it.

Judd, realizing that his partner's liberty depended largely upon his testimony, with note-book in hand told where, from day to day, he and Budd had been, and what they had done. The testimony was absolute, and should have been conclusive.

Budd then had himself put under oath, and testified that though he knew Hope Island was Mr.

Johnson's summer residence, no thought had ever come to him to visit it until the previous afternoon, when he found himself near the island.

"I then felt," he continued, "a curiosity to see the place, and landing, went, as they have testified, boldly across the fields, because I had nothing to be ashamed of. Finding a window open, I at once concluded that burglars had been there, and I went in to see to what extent the property had been injured, and it was my purpose to report to Mr. Johnson at once the crime that had been committed. Now I would like Mr. Johnson to be put upon the stand, that I may ask him a few questions."

Mr. Johnson, with evident reluctance, took the witness-chair for his cross-examination.

"How long had my father worked for you previous to the crime he is said to have committed?"

"Fifteen or sixteen years," was the reply.

"Why did you keep him so long in your employ?" Budd now asked.

"I object," said the Prosecuting Attorney.

"Your Honor," said Budd, "the prosecution have tried to injure my character to-day by telling about my father. They have told only evil. I wish now to show there is some good."

"I don't know as Mr. Johnson is obliged to answer these questions," said the Justice, nodding blandly to the wealthy man, "but he may, if he chooses."

"I decline to answer," said Mr. Johnson, after consulting with his attorney.

"I will ask the witness one other question—one

with reference to myself—with the Court's permission," said Budd.

"Have I not, Mr. Johnson, paid you a portion of the money you claim my father took from you?"

"I decline to answer that question also," replied Mr. Johnson, noticing that his attorney shook his head negatively.

"May I then put in this paper as testimony?" asked Budd, taking a slip from his pocket and extending it toward the Justice. "It is Mr. Johnson's receipt for five hundred dollars that I paid him last March."

"I hardly think it would be proper," said the Justice, looking toward Mr. Johnson for his approval of the ruling.

"I then rest my case," said Budd, shortly, and with some show of indignation.

The Prosecuting Attorney now began his argument. He dwelt mainly upon the facts that Budd had been found where he ought not to have been, and that Judd Floyd, as his partner, was of course interested in acquitting the prisoner. Though that witness had shown where he and the accused were in the daytime since May 20th, he had failed to show where they were in the *nights*, and the burglary had doubtless been committed in the night time; burglaries usually were. He concluded by reminding the Justice that it was not for him to find the prisoner guilty; but if, in his judgment, he thought there was a *probability* of his guilt, it was his duty to bind him over to a higher court.

Budd, already aware that the Justice seemed to favor the prosecution, simply stated in his argument for the defense what he had proved by his witnesses, and that that acquitted him of the special charge included in the warrant. He alluded to the general good character he had borne since he came into the neighborhood, and concluded with the words:

"I am innocent of the crime with which I am accused. My father is also innocent of the crime for which he is in prison to-day. One link in the chain of establishing his innocence I have already discovered. Whatever may be the decision of the Court to-day respecting myself, as sure as there is a just God in Heaven, a few weeks more will see every shadow of disgrace swept away from our names."

So positive were the lad's tones, so triumphant his gestures, so confident his looks, that many of the audience were thrilled as though they heard a voice of prophecy—a prophecy soon to be fulfilled.

The Justice may himself have felt, somewhat, the influence of the lad's declaration, for he gathered up his papers with an unsteady hand, and looked uneasily about the room and into the upturned faces waiting for his decision. The stillness grew oppressive. Finally the eye of the Justice rested upon Mr. Johnson, who was gazing expectantly up into the little man's face, and the great and wealthy man's wish became the law of the baser one's soul:

"I think," he said, speaking sharply and looking

directly at Mr. Johnson, "there is sufficient probability of the prisoner's guilt to warrant my binding him over to the higher court, which meets at the county seat in November."

Then, to Budd:

"I'll fix your bond at one thousand dollars, and unless you can furnish a bondsman I will have to commit you to the county jail to await your trial."

CHAPTER XIII.

MR. BENTON'S LITTLE GAME.

BUDD was partially prepared for the Trial Justice's decision, as it was but the natural result of the bias he had shown in his rulings; but the excessive amount of the bond astonished him and filled him with alarm. He had thought, in case he was bound over to the higher court, the bond would be fixed at a few hundred dollars, and that some of his or Judd's friends would be willing to become surety for so small an amount; but when the Justice named the sum of one thousand dollars he felt there was but one alternative—he must go to jail.

His alarm at the prospect was not due so much to the fact that he shrunk from confinement in the jail as that the confinement would defeat his whole plans. Just as he had some hope of proving his father's innocence, and of rescuing him from an unjust imprisonment, his hopes were to be ruthlessly crushed, his purpose thwarted, and he himself stigmatized as a criminal. It was with difficulty that he could restrain the hot tears that were struggling to flow.

The Justice had been rapidly filling out a paper since he had rendered his decision, and now he looked up:

"Your bond is ready," he said. "Whom do you name for bondsman?"

"I have none," faltered the lad, "unless some gentleman here will give bond for me."

Mr. Wright, who sat near the boy, felt that this touching appeal was meant for him, and at once there began a struggle in his heart. He had always liked Budd. So far as he knew, Budd had always been perfectly honorable; and he could not help thinking the lad had established his innocence beyond a shadow of a doubt. Still Mr. Johnson's testimony as to the father's character had had its influence upon him, and he was not quite sure it would be just wise to become the boy's bondsman. While he hesitated, he and the others in the court-room were surprised to hear a voice say:

"I'll sign his bond."

The speaker was Mr. Benton, and that gentleman walked forward to the Justice's stand and deliberately wrote his name across the paper.

"I guess that'll stand the law," he remarked; and before Budd could even thank him he strode from the court-room, as though ashamed of his act.

No sooner had he disappeared than Mr. Wright walked up to the Justice's desk, saying, quietly:

"Put my name on the bond also. Two bondsmen are better than one;" and he wrote his name under that of Mr. Benton's.

Then, crossing over to Budd's side, he shook hands with him, remarking:

"Mr. Benton got the start of me; but I have

shown my good-will, all the same. Shall we go, now?"

Budd thought, by his look more than his words, that he desired to see him alone, and so followed him out of the court-room.

When they reached the street, Mr. Wright took Budd by the arm and led him away from the throng that was pouring out of the building, and said:

"Look out for Mr. Benton. His name on your bond to-day means mischief. I don't know what game he is about to play, but by putting my own there I hope to baffle him."

Before Budd could express his surprise at Mr. Wright's words they were joined by Judd and Mr. Dane. That gentleman shook hands with the released lad and said:

"Had I been known to the Justice I should have offered myself for your bondsman, though you should never have needed one. How in the world that thick-headed Justice could have given such a decision is a mystery to me. I——"

But what the speaker was to have said was cut short by a nudge from Judd.

Mr. Johnson and the Justice were passing, and that his words had been heard was only too evident by Mr. Johnson's frown and the Justice's ridiculous action.

"I fine you ten dollars for contempt of court," he said, angrily, stopping and facing Mr. Dane.

"I believe your court is adjourned, and I am on the public highway, expressing my private opinion to

friends," replied Mr. Dane, coolly. "But I am not surprised at your want of judgment. It is only on a par with that you showed in the court-room, and suggests the fact that this town is sadly in need of at least one new Justice."

A laugh from the gathering crowd sent the hot blood to the Justice's face, and catching some idea of the foolish position into which he had allowed himself to be drawn by his anger, he hurried off down the street.

"Will you return to Bristol at once?" Budd asked. "If so, we will arrange to take you over."

"No," replied Mr. Dane; "I have business in Providence, and will go round that way. Good-by;" and refusing to take the slightest compensation for coming over as a witness, he shook hands with Mr. Wright and the lads and departed.

Budd spoke a few words in a low tone to his partner; then he said to Mr. Wright:

"Can you go over to the island with us? There is something special we wish to talk over with you."

"My man is down here with me, and can drive the team along to 'The Hummocks' and wait for me there, if you will put me ashore after this matter is talked over," answered Mr. Wright.

The lads consented to that arrangement gladly, and a few minutes later, with Mr. Wright on board the sloop with them, they sailed for home.

As soon as they were a short distance off shore, Budd left his partner to look out for the boat, and in

low tones told Mr. Wright the true story of his father's trial and imprisonment. He then related Judd's and his own experience with Bagsley and his companions, and stated that this was the real purpose that called him over to Hope Island.

"Why didn't you tell this in the court-room? It would have acquitted you," said Mr. Wright, in astonishment.

"Because the burglars are still around here contemplating some more daring crime, and we are watching for them, and hope to cause their arrest," explained Budd, going on to relate how he believed this would react in his father's favor.

"What we want of you," continued Budd, "is to come over to the island and see the window, with its cut pane, and the lantern the burglars left behind, so that you can testify as to these facts at the trial before the higher court."

A few moments later the island was reached, and Mr. Wright was taken from point to point, the whole story of that night's experience was told anew, and the evidence of it exhibited.

"I wish you all success in your plans," Mr. Wright said, as he got into the yawl to be taken over to "The Hummocks," where they could see his team was already waiting. "But don't run into any danger; and as soon as you locate the rascals, notify the authorities without waiting for them to commit any other crime. Their visit here and over at Hope Island is enough to send them up for a long term of years."

As he parted with them on the main shore he said to Budd:

"I ought to tell you that for a few minutes I hesitated about becoming your bondsman, and Mr. Benton's act led me to a decision. I now thoroughly believe in your and your father's innocence, and shall stand by you, whatever comes. Only, look out for Mr. Benton."

"What does he mean?" asked Judd, as the sloop started down the bay to visit the pounds, which the incidents of the morning had till then prevented.

"He is sure Mr. Benton did not sign my bond from any good motive; and I confess it does seem queer, come to think of it. What do you suppose he is up to?"

"I don't know any more than you do," responded his chum; "but, like Mr. Wright, I distrust him. And there is one thing you may be sure of. If he is up to any game he will show himself very soon; he isn't going to give you time to run away and make him pay that thousand dollars. You see, he don't know Mr. Wright signed the bond also, for he had left the court-room before that was done."

"That's so," said Budd, thoughtfully; "and I think, with you, we shall hear from him before a great while, if his act sprung from any sinister motive."

"There is your man," Judd announced a few hours later, as they approached their wharf; and Mr. Benton was indeed sitting on the dock, awaiting their coming.

"How are you, boys, and what luck with your fish?" he remarked pleasantly, as they came ashore.

The young partners responded good-naturedly, and he watched them as they sorted and put their fish into the "cars."

"My, what a large one!" he exclaimed, as Budd picked up a six-pound mackerel, and was about to toss it into the proper "car."

"Would you like it?" asked the lad; and as Mr. Benton gave assent he tossed it into the man's boat, which had been fastened near by.

"Have you been here long waiting for us?" Judd asked, with a wink at his chum.

"Well, yes," responded Mr. Benton. "I come over here 'bout as soon as I could after I went home from the village; but you'd gone."

"We hadn't been to the pounds to-day, and so hurried off to them," explained Budd.

"I thought that was it," said Mr. Benton, following the lads on to the house.

"Come in and take supper with us," asid Budd.

"I don't know but I will, seeing I have a little business with ye."

Judd gave his partner a significant look.

Supper was soon ready, and they sat down at the table. Mr. Benton showed that whatever his business with them was he had not lost his appetite, and a half-hour elapsed before the meal was finished. Then Budd led the way into the sitting-room, and showing Mr. Benton to a chair, ventured to hasten matters by asking:

"What is your business, Mr. Benton?"

"Ahem! ahem!" said he, as though clearing his throat from some impediment. "I signed yer bond fer ye to-day, Budd, or else ye'd now be on yer way to Kingston jail. Hev ye thought o' that?"

"Do you really think so?" responded Budd, and waiting for Mr. Benton to go on.

"Yes, ye would," said the man, shortly; "an' ye know it, well as I do."

"It was very good of you," said the boy, meaningly.

"An' I thought, as I'd done ye the favor, ye might pay me back that thirty dollers that don't belong to ye," said the miser, coming to the point of his business with Budd.

"Why should I? It belonged to me, not to you," Budd retorted.

"No it don't, either. Ye have quit work, an' 'cordin' to the barg'in it never did belong to ye."

"What will you do if I don't pay it?" asked Budd, as though yielding.

"I'll go an' cancel the bond, an' have ye in jail 'fore mornin'," he said, savagely.

"And if I do pay it you will cancel the bond, just the same, and land me in jail. Confess, now, that's your game," remarked Budd, seeing through Mr. Benton's purpose.

The man twisted in his chair.

"Ye'd better pay it," he finally said.

"Not one cent," replied Budd, decidedly.

"Then I'll go to the village right off an' cancel

the bond, an' bring down the officer," declared Mr. Benton, grabbing up his hat and starting for the door.

With a laugh Budd and his partner followed the man to his boat.

He got into it and rowed off a rod or two from the shore; then he paused and said:

"Ye'd better change yer mind, Budd."

"How do you know I'll be here when you get back?" asked Budd, mischievously. "I can take the sloop and be miles away from here before you get to the village."

"Judd, ye hold on to him!" cried the man in alarm; "I command ye in the name o' the law to do so!"

Judd laughed, and catching the spirit of mischief Budd had displayed, asked:

"What'll you give me, if I do?"

"A doller," said Mr. Benton, with some hesitation.

"Oh! Budd will give me more than that to let him go," replied Judd, "and you will have the thousand dollars to pay!"

"I'll give ye five dollers," cried Mr. Benton, in alarm.

"Budd will give ten to go free," was the answer.

"I'll give ye 'leven," said the man, desperately; and in his eagerness he rowed back inshore.

"Where's the money? It must be cash down," said Judd, seriously.

"I left my money at home 'fore I come down

here," explained the man, "fer I didn't know what ye fellers might do; but I'll pay ye to-morrow."

Before Judd could make answer, Budd, pitying the man, said:

"I promise not to go away before morning, Mr. Benton. But even if you go to the village, no officer will return with you, for after you left Mr. Wright also signed my bond."

Mr. Benton gave an exclamation of anger.

"He's always interferin' with me," he said; "but I'll go up an' see if it's as you say. Remember yer promise now," and he rowed off toward the village.

He found, on arriving there, that Budd had told the truth, but succeeded in getting his own name released after much persuasion; and realizing that his little game had been completely baffled, he started sullenly for home.

As he passed Fox Island his anger was again aroused, and he exclaimed, bitterly:

'Twas all owin' to Wright's meddlin', an' that's what made Budd so lively. I wish I could get hold of su'thin' o' his; he'd not see it ag'in till he paid me them thirty dollers."

His eye just then caught the outline of the boys' sloop through the darkness.

"I have it!" exclaimed he. "I'll take their boats;" and without thinking that his act was theft he rowed quietly in to the island.

Five minutes later he sailed off in the sloop, having the yawl and his own boat in tow.

Going down the bay a mile, he ran the boats into

a secluded bay adjacent to his own land, and then tramping up to his house for chains and padlocks, he fastened them all securely. Then he tramped up the hill to his house chuckling to himself:

"I've not only got twice the value o' them thirty dollers, but I've taken away every means for the boys to leave the island."

CHAPTER XIV.

TWO OPPORTUNITIES.

WHEN Mr. Benton, in his chuckling, had declared that he had taken away every means the young firm had for reaching the main shore, he overlooked two important facts: first, that the island at its nearest point was not over a half-mile from the main-land; and, second, that there was an abundance of material on the island from which to construct a temporary float, even were there not other ways of effecting a landing.

Now the events of the previous chapter, it will be remembered, occurred on a Thursday; consequently the next day was Friday, and the young firm's greatest salesday of all the week. The trial and the incidents antecedent to it had greatly hindered the lads' work, also; and when they retired at an early hour on Thursday night, therefore, it was with a determination to be up the next morning long before their usual time, which was in no sense late.

There was, moreover, a special reason for the boys to be up early this particular morning, for a telegram the day before had brought an order for an extra supply of fish to be shipped that morning

by the earliest train to the city. That train left at six o'clock, and the fish must be packed and at the depot before that hour. So it happened that the lads were up at a little past three o'clock, and breakfast was eaten and they were out at the wharf before four.

Immediately after their first exclamations of surprise at the disappearance of the boats Judd asked:

"Who do you suppose has taken them, chum?"

"One of two parties," responded Budd, promptly; "either Bagsley and his gang, or Mr. Benton."

"It makes a vast difference to us which," remarked Judd, with his favorite whistle. "How are we going to find out which party it was?"

"By using a little reason, first of all things," said Budd, with a smile. "There are some things that make it improbable that it was Bagsley and his companions. To have taken the boats they must have been prowling around here before last night, and that isn't likely, for with our sharp lookout we would have discovered some trace of them. Again, if it were him and his crew, they must have discovered that you were my only companion here, and they would have done something more serious than simply to take the boats. I don't say that these are positive proofs that they are not the ones who have taken the boats, but they make it look at least improbable. Then, again, if it were those fellows, they have carried out 'the little job' they talked of, and used the boats as a means of escape. If we don't hear within a few hours of some burglary

near at hand, I shall feel conclusively that they are not guilty of this act."

"You think, then, that Benton has done it?" inquired Judd. "What could have been his object?"

"Just this," replied his partner, earnestly: "He left the house angry that he had been baffled in his purpose. Coming down by the wharf, here, he thought of the boats, and has taken them, either to hold them until I pay him the thirty dollars he has asked for, or by shutting us on the island and hindering our work he hopes to find a partial revenge for his disappointment."

"But don't he know it was a theft?" asked Judd, hotly.

"He probably don't call it so, and may not really mean to keep the boats; but the law will put that interpretation upon his act, and that gives us a great opportunity."

"What do you mean?" asked Judd, a little mystified.

"To have him arrested, and, even if we do not push the matter to the end, frighten him so thoroughly he will let us alone after this;" and Budd went on to explain that this had been Mr. Wright's way of dealing with the man.

"But before we can do this we will have to get ashore, and then our fish must be at the depot before six o'clock," said Judd, dryly.

"I know it," assented his comrade, "and we must stop this talk and go ashore. Once on shore, you must go to the village and get Ben Taylor's boat for

the day and come back here. Meanwhile I will go down along the shore, and see if Mr. Benton has taken the boats down to that little cove adjacent to his farm. I'll try and be back at "The Hummocks," so you can pick me up as you come down with the boat. It is about four o'clock, now, and by five we must be back here; then, by stirring lively, we can get the fish packed and down to the depot in time for the train."

"You talk just as though we could go right over to the main shore without the slightest trouble," said Judd, laughingly. "Are you going to walk over?"

"No," said Budd, briefly; "but I'm going to put my clothes into our smallest tub, and pushing that ahead of me, swim over. We could, of course, make a raft, but we haven't the time for it;" and Budd ran back to the house, appearing again in a moment with the tub.

He found his companion already undressing, and not three minutes had elapsed before both boys, pushing the tub before them, were swimming for the nearest point of the main shore. They were equally good swimmers, and in about fifteen minutes reached the point, and dressing, each hurried off his appointed way.

Budd's way was down across "The Hummocks" to "the narrows," which he was obliged to swim; but as the distance was short, he managed to do it carrying his clothes in a bundle on his head. Dressing again, he ran along the shore to the cove he had

mentioned, and laughed aloud when he came to the boats so securely padlocked.

"My dear Mr. Benton," he said, mockingly, as he started back up the bay, "had you hitched them with a tow-line I would not have disturbed them. You will yourself be glad to bring them back before the day is over."

He re-swam "the narrows," and reached the point of land opposite the island before Judd had returned. But he had not long to wait; and when he had taken a seat in Mr. Taylor's yawl with his partner, under their united strokes the light boat sped through the water like a racer. With quick and dexterous hands the fish were packed, and ten minutes before the appointed hour the box was landed at the railroad station.

Budd had told his chum, as soon as he had rejoined him, of the discovery he had made, and so the young partners went directly from the depot to the house of the proper officer for swearing out a warrant against Mr. Benton, and in half an hour Mr. Avery, the constable, was driving toward that gentleman's residence with the warrant in his pocket.

Arriving at the farm a little past seven o'clock, he was told that Mr. Benton had gone down to the shore. He followed him down there, and found the unsuspecting man standing by the stolen boats.

"Good-morning, Mr. Benton," he said. "You have quite a collection of craft here. Isn't that Boyd & Floyd's sloop and yawl?"

It seems almost incredible that Mr. Benton did not even now suspect the officer's errand, or the nature of his own act; and realizing this, Mr. Avery enjoyed the situation immensely.

"Well, yes," assented the farmer. "Ye see, Budd owes me, an' I thought I'd take his sloop until he paid me."

"But running off in the night with another person's property is not a legal way to collect one's debts," said the officer, dryly, "and I am obliged to arrest you for stealing those boats. You will hardly deny the theft now, since your own confession;" and the officer took out his warrant.

Mr. Benton fairly shook with excitement and rage.

"Me 'rested!" he cried. "Who's dared to do it?"

"I have," remarked the officer, quietly; "and you can come along with me without fuss or I'll put these on you;" and he took a pair of iron bracelets from his pocket.

For the first time comprehending the real situation into which his thoughtless act of the night before had brought him, the man turned pale and stammered out the words:

"But I didn't really mean to keep the boats. I only took them to bring Budd to terms, an' then I was goin' to let him have them ag'in."

"It looks as though you did mean to keep them; you certainly have secured them very thoroughly," responded the officer, significantly. "But as to your real motive, you can settle that with the Court.

But I cannot stop here talking with you. Would you like to go to the house and change your clothes before you go with me, Mr. Benton?"

"Go where with you—up to the village?" asked he, quickly.

"No; I've got to take you to the county jail. Your offense, owing to the amount you have taken, is made returnable to the Court of Common Pleas, and that does not sit until September. I shall have to take you to the jail until the time for your trial," explained Mr. Avery.

Dazed and overwhelmed at the prospect before him, Mr. Benton followed the officer back to the house.

"See here," he said, as they reached the threshold and a sudden hope came to him, "can't I settle this with the boys? I don't want to go to jail. I've no one to look out for things, it's a'most hayin' time, and I want to be here to home. I'll take the boats right back, if ye say so."

"You will have to see the lads for yourself," said Mr. Avery, shortly.

"Can't you take me where they are an' let me talk it over with them?" he asked, eagerly.

"Yes, if you will pay for it," consented Mr. Avery. "My orders were to arrest you and carry you to jail, and that is all the law will allow me to collect fees for; but if you will pay me for my time, I'm willing to ride around with you all day."

"How much will ye charge?" asked Mr. Benton, cautiously.

"Thirty cents an hour," said the officer, looking at his watch.

It was a hard thing for the grasping man to do, but he finally consented; and taking him into his buggy, Mr. Avery drove off in search of the boys.

Judd was found in the village, but would consent to no settlement until his partner was found. There was little prospect of finding Budd until he returned from his peddling trip, and Mr. Benton groaned more and more as the hours ran by and he knew it was adding to the amount he should have to pay the officer. But he soon found that amount was but a trifle compared with what he should have to pay before the young firm consented to his release.

About two o'clock Budd came back to the village, where he had agreed to meet Judd in anticipation of the very event for which his presence was now desired. The lads had time to talk the matter over before they saw Mr. Benton, and when he appeared they were ready to state their terms.

After listening to Mr. Benton's proposition to return the boats, Budd, as spokesman for the firm, replied:

"Mr. Benton's act not only caused us a great deal of personal annoyance, but it interfered with our business arrangements. Again, we do not know how soon he may annoy us in some other way. We propose to make this affair a good lesson to him, and we will therefore settle it on three conditions:

"First, that he shall return the boats unharmed to our dock at the island.

"Second, that he pay all costs that have accrued on account of his arrest.

"Third, that he pay us twenty-five dollars for the annoyance and business delays he has caused, and give bonds for his future good behavior.

"These are the only conditions on which we will settle, and he can accept them or stand his trial in court."

After a great deal of protestation Mr. Benton agreed to all but the giving of bonds for his good behavior, and as he solemnly promised to let them alone in the future, the lads yielded. The money was paid to them, the costs were settled, the boats returned before night, and the young firm withdrew their complaint.

"You have completely silenced one of your enemies, Budd," remarked Judd, that evening. "Now, if only some opportunity will come for you to bring Bagsley into a spot where you can dictate your terms, your triumph will be complete."

"I hope it may," was the response.

That opportunity was nearer at hand than either of the lads thought, for on the following Monday the whole community was startled by learning that the most daring robbery ever committed in that vicinity had taken place some time between the hours of twelve o'clock on Saturday night and six o'clock on Monday morning. A jeweler's store on the main street of the village had during that time been entered and completely gutted. Watches, gold and silverware, jewelry and precious stones,

had been carried away to the amount of over five thousand dollars.

The store ran back from the main street to a narrow alley. A window opening on this alley had been forced, the safe blown open, and all the stock of any real value carried off. The work had evidently been done by experts, and they had disappeared without leaving a single trace behind them.

Budd learned of the robbery about ten o'clock on Monday morning. He had gone over to the village in the sloop to make a deposit of money and checks at the bank, for the young firm had reached the dignity of having a bank account, and while in the banking-rooms had his attention called to a poster which had already appeared about the village. It read:

$1,500 REWARD.

One thousand dollars will be paid for the arrest and conviction of the burglars who entered our store some time between the hours of twelve o'clock on Saturday night, June 24th, and six o'clock on Monday morning, June 26th. Five hundred dollars additional will be given for the return of the goods that were carried off, or ten per cent. of that amount for each thousand dollars worth of goods restored.

Respectfully,

CLAPP & ST. JOHN.

After inquiring of the bank-teller more of the particulars respecting the robbery, Budd went around to the store and made a careful examination of the premises. He found the shutter of the

window had been opened by forcing some powerful instrument under the iron bar that ran across the outside, and thus prying the bar out of its socket. Then a pane of glass had been cut out as neatly and deftly as the one over at the island. The fastening of the window had in this way been reached, and the window shoved up. As soon as Budd had noticed these details he left the building and started down toward his boat.

"That was the work of Bagsley and his gang," he murmured, "and our opportunity, if we can only find them, has come."

CHAPTER XV.

BUDD ENTRAPPED.

JUST BEFORE Budd reached the wharf he noticed another poster tacked up on the side of a storehouse, and paused to read it, that he might be sure of the terms under which the reward was offered.

As he stood there a well-dressed stranger came up behind him, and also paused to read the notice.

"That is quite a reward," he remarked, after reading it; "a nice little sum for some one to earn. Do you know whether any particular persons are suspected of the crime?"

"They are simply believed to have been experts," answered Budd.

"It was a neat job, that's a fact," said the man, complacently.

Then as Budd turned away he asked, politely:

"Do you know of any one about the wharf here who has boats to let?"

"I have a sloop," replied Budd, "that I use to take out sailing-parties."

"Is it near here? Could I see it?" asked the man, looking Budd carefully over from head to foot.

The lad led the way down to the dock and pointed out the Sea Witch.

"She would do nicely," said the man, jumping into her and examining her cabin. "Is she a fast sailer?"

"Nothing of her size on this bay can overhaul her," replied Budd, with a touch of pride.

"Indeed!" remarked the man, with apparent satisfaction. "What do you ask a day for her use?"

"We never let her except myself or my partner go with her," explained Budd, "and our prices depend on the party and the time we are gone."

"Which of course is a very nice way to arrange it, I'm sure," said the stranger.

"Well, to come to business. My name is Wilson —Thomas Kortright Wilson—a direct descendant of James Wilson, of Philadelphia, one of the Signers of the Declaration of Independence, and once a Judge of the United States Supreme Court. Doubtless you have heard of him;" and Mr. Wilson said this with an air and tone that implied "You are very ignorant if you have not."

Budd modestly admitted that he had heard of that distinguished gentleman, and then his companion went on:

"I am camping out with a party of friends upon Patience Island. We have been there a week, but we can stand it no longer. It is horribly lonesome there; not a house on the island, not a solitary person there but ourselves. There is no gunning or fishing worth speaking of, and this morning the

boys voted for a change, and sent me over here to hire a boat to take us and our camping outfit to Block Island, so I rowed over in that boat," and Mr. Wilson here pointed to a small skiff a few rods below the wharf, "and walked up the street till I met you. It is wonderful good fortune that I should have run in with you at once. Now, what will you ask to move our camp?"

"How many are there in your party, and how much of an outfit have you?" asked Budd.

"There are five of us, and we have only a few traps; you can carry everything at one trip," said Mr. Wilson, briskly.

"I ought to have five dollars," Budd declared; "and I shall have to go home before I can make the trip."

"Well, can you go right after dinner?" asked the stranger.

"Yes, at one o'clock I'll be here," said the lad.

"All right; we'll give you your price. Meantime, where can I get a good dinner?"

Budd gave him directions how to find the leading hotel, and then cast off the fastenings of the sloop and sped away for the island.

Promptly at one o'clock he was at the village, and as he took Mr. Wilson on board he asked if he should run down and take the gentleman's skiff in tow; for, expecting to do this, he had left his own yawl with Judd.

"No, never mind that; it isn't worth taking with us," replied Mr. Wilson.

Budd thought it a little strange, but had not the slightest suspicion that the skiff was not the property of the stranger, and that his story about crossing over in it that morning was a sheer fabrication.

There was another statement in the man's story that would have seemed very strange to Budd had he only thought of it. He had stated that he and his party had been camping out on Patience Island for a week; yet the island was small, and Budd had himself been down by it but five days before, and at that time there was no sign of a camping-party upon it. But utterly unconscious of the man's falsehoods, the lad sailed straight on into what was destined to be the most trying experience through which he had yet passed.

The gentleman chatted away pleasantly as he sat by Budd in the stern of the sloop. He asked questions about the islands and the main-land they were passing. He wanted to know how long before they would reach Patience Island, and how long it would take to run out to Block Island with that breeze. He assured Budd his companions would have everything packed on their arrival, and there would be no unnecessary delay in starting on their long trip.

As they neared the island of their destination he informed the lad that the camp had been on the east side, and on running around the south end, Budd saw, no great distance away, the place of the encampment. It was true the tent was down, and the boxes and bags were piled close by the shore, but this was just as Mr. Wilson had said it would be;

and when four men came out from behind a large rock, and walked down to the heap of stuff, Budd said:

"They are ready and waiting for us, it seems, Mr. Wilson; but I can't get in to the shore with the sloop, and how will you get your goods on board? You ought to have brought your skiff."

"They have a boat, a better one; that's why I left the other," said he; "but run in as close as you can and anchor, and I'll tell them to load up and come on board."

Not a shadow of the coming evil was as yet apparent to the unsuspicious boy. Giving his whole attention to his sloop, he only cast the merest glance at the men on shore until he had anchored. At liberty now, however, he looked steadily at the men, to whom Mr. Wilson was already shouting. Then he gave a sharp cry of alarm, and drawing his pocket-knife he sprung forward to cut the anchor-cable. His words were:

"Gracious! There is Bagsley, and you are the robbers!"

But quick as he was, Mr. Wilson was quicker. Springing upon the lad, he bore him down upon the forward deck and called loudly for help. Two of the men on shore jumped into a yawl that lay hidden behind a projecting rock, and without stopping to load their stuff pushed out to the sloop. One of the men was Bagsley himself, and when he had assisted Mr. Wilson in tying the lad, hand and foot, he gave a look at him, and then with a terrible oath exclaimed:

"It is Budd Boyd! Where did you run in with him?"

Mr. Wilson briefly explained how he had hired the boy, not supposing for an instant that he knew any of the gang. "But," he went on, "the moment the lad caught sight of you he called your name, and said we were the robbers. He then tried to cut the anchor-cable, but I spoiled that little game. The question is, what shall we do with him?"

"Tie a big stone to his neck and to his feet and drop him overboard," answered Bagsley. "I told him I'd kill him the next time I saw him. He'll be sure to give us away, too, if we let him go, and our only safety is to put him out of the way."

Budd, as he lay bound only a few feet away, shuddered at the coolness with which the villain said these words, and felt that his very moments were numbered. To his surprise, however, the man who had come off from the shore with Bagsley, and whom he recognized as the leader of the gang when they were at Fox Island, said:

"No, there is to be no murder, boys, as long as we can get along without it. Put the boy into the yawl and take him ashore. We'll change our plans, and put him where he cannot give any alarm until we are out of all danger."

Wilson and Bagsley lifted the lad into the boat, and the captain following them, they rowed ashore.

A hurried consultation was now held, but in such low tones that Budd could only catch here and there a word. He was able to recognize, however,

in one of the two men who had remained on the island while the captain and Bagsley came to Wilson's help, the third man of the trio that had been at his home. The other man, like Wilson, was a stranger, and had evidently joined the gang since the time of that visitation. After awhile he caught the words of the leader of the party:

"I tell you, boys, that is the only safe way for us to do. As we'll fix the lad, he can't get away for a day or two, perhaps longer, and by that time we will be where he cannot harm us."

"If he ever gets away he'll mark me for this affair, and will leave no stone unturned till I'm found," said Bagsley, moodily.

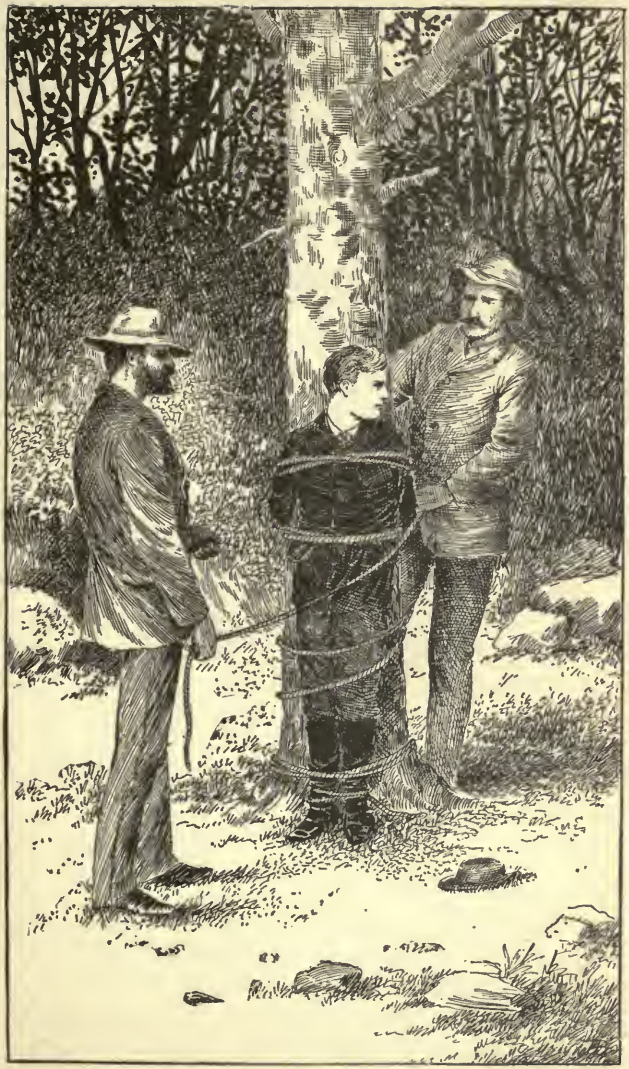
"I think even you will be satisfied with the way we'll fix him," laughed the leader. "Untie his feet, get another rope, and bring him on."

Bagsley obeyed with alacrity, and the captain led the way over into the center of the island where a small depression in the surface cut off all view of the bay. A tree stood very near the lowest point of the hollow, and standing Budd up against the trunk of this, the captain, with Bagsley's help, tied him so firmly to it that there seemed no possibility of his untying himself.

"There, Bagsley," the leader now said, stepping off a few feet to view the lad, "he is where he can see no one, and no one can see him. He may possibly attract the attention of some passing boat by hallooing, but it is a mere chance. He may possibly untie himself after awhile, but that, too, is a mere

possibility. His friends, searching for him, will go to Block Island first; and if, after awhile, they think of coming here, they may be in time to rescue him, and they may not. Still you and I don't know that he will die here, and our consciences need not be troubled with any thoughts of his murder, for we know, and can make oath to it, that we left him here alive and in good health; only, his opportunities for locomotion are exceedingly limited."

With this heartless remark the two villains walked slowly away, leaving Budd to his uncertain fate.



The captain with Bagsley's help tied Budd so firmly to the tree that there seemed no possibility of his untying himself. 155

CHAPTER XVI.

JUDD MAKES AN IMPORTANT DISCOVERY.

AN HOUR or so after Budd had sailed away from Fox Island to meet Mr. Wilson at the village and go on the prearranged trip, Judd got into the yawl and started down the bay to visit the fish-pounds. Some impulse came to him, as he rowed along, to first visit (though it was contrary to their usual way of doing) the pound over on the shore of Conanicut Island. Just before reaching it he happened to glance up the bay, and saw the Sea Witch tacking down toward him.

"Budd will get down along here before I leave the pound," he remarked to himself, "and I'll hail him and find out what time he expects to get back to-night."

Then he rowed leisurely on to the pound and began his work. It was no easy job to handle the seine alone; and for those readers who are not familiar with this fish-trap, so common to the New England coast, we will accompany Judd in his task.

It is low tide, and thus the very best time for the work, as the net is now fully exposed to view, and can therefore be the more readily examined for any

breaks, and all foreign substances that have collected in its meshes can be the more easily discovered and removed. The various times of day, then, at which the young firm have heretofore been represented as visiting the pounds were not a mere matter of choice on their part, but were the times that the ebbing tide had made it best to do so, and it is the same reason that has brought Judd here just at this hour.

He rows in to the first stake, just a few feet below low-water mark, where his *leader* begins. Slowly along this he works his way toward the pound, five hundred feet off shore. He sees that every stake is still firm, and that the net is stretched tautly between the posts; that the sinkers are still holding its lower edge down to the bottom of the bay, and that its upper edge is properly attached to the top of each stake.

Here and there he pulls away a bunch of seaweed, or some floating log or plank that the tide has brought up against the net, and which, if allowed to remain there, might under a heavy sea do great damage to the leader. By and by he has reached the great circular pound or trap, which, like a tremendous basin, rounds out each way from his lead-line; and now the hard work begins. Round and round the basin he goes, pulling here and pulling there, all the while drawing the great purse into a smaller circumference, and nearer to the surface. The splashing and boiling water within, here and there the flash of a fin, and then a tremendous

surge to the right or the left, as the case may be, tell of the fish imprisoned in the seine.

More than once Judd wishes for his partner's strong arm to help him; more than once the struggling mass of fish pull back into the deep all the slack seine, compelling the lad to do his work over again; but at last he is successful, and the fish are bagged into a corner of the net, and held there so firmly that there is no possible escape. The scoop-net is now brought into play, and rapidly the fish are dipped up and emptied down into the bottom of the yawl. When the last one has been removed the great purse-net is again lowered into the water, and the openings at each side of the leader, wide at the outer edge, but extremely narrow at the inner, are properly adjusted, and the work for that day is over—unless, indeed, some huge rent in the meshes of the seine compel it to be loosened from its stakes and carried ashore for extensive repairs.

This time there is no rent, and Judd has about got the net into its place, when, glancing up, he sees that the next tack of the Sea Witch will bring her down near him. Adjusting the net here and there, he waits for her approach. Ten minutes later she is evidently as near to him as she is coming, for her tiller is thrown about, and slowly she swings around for the next tack. He raises his hands to his mouth, like a trumpet, and is about to utter a prolonged whoop, to attract Budd's attention; but no sound issues from his lips. Instead, he drops his

hands, catches hold of the net, pulls his yawl rapidly around to the leader, and then works along it toward the shore.

Why is this sudden change? Because, as the sail of the Sea Witch swung slowly around for the reverse tack, he saw Budd was not on board. Nor was this all. In three of those passengers he recognized Bagsley and his two companions when at Fox Island eight or ten days before, and like a flash it comes to him that Budd is a prisoner, and the robbers are running away with the sloop.

As he works his way to the shore he watches the sloop furtively, to be sure that his action has not awakened any suspicion on the part of the men in her; but he knows there is little danger of this, for though he recognizes them, they are not likely to think that he, who is at work so innocently there by that fish-trap, is the other owner of the boat, and has already divined their purpose.

Not too fast, so as not to specially attract their attention, he goes along the leader, stopping just an instant now and then in mere pretense to adjust the netting. But the moment their tack has taken the sloop so far across the bay that his movements cannot be readily discerned, he suddenly becomes the very embodiment of activity and purpose.

Two or three vigorous pulls send the yawl inshore, where it is promptly secured beyond the reach of a rising tide, for Judd has no idea just when he will come to claim it again. Even the fish are forgotten as the boy runs rapidly up the west

slope of the island to the nearest farm-house; and he gives a cry of joy, as he reaches it, to find the farmer, with whom he is slightly acquainted, just driving his horse and wagon out of the yard.

"Are you going down to Jamestown Ferry, Mr. Niles?" he eagerly asks.

"Yes, jump in," replies the kind-hearted farmer.

Judd waits for no second invitation, but springing into the wagon, he points off to the west bay, saying:

"Do you see that sloop over under the west shore, Mr. Niles?"

"Yes," replies he, "and it looks like yours."

"It is; and a gang of fellows are running off with her, and I wish you would get me to the ferry about as quick as you can. I want to get over to Newport, hire a tug, and head them off before they reach Beaver Tail, if possible. I'll pay you whatever you ask for driving me down there," was Judd's surprising statement.

The interest of the farmer was at once awakened.

"Sho', now, you don't say so!" he exclaimed. "Lor'! I'll get you there for the next boat over to the city, and won't ask you anything, either. I just hope you'll get them;" and the farmer plied his whip to the horse with a force that sent him tearing down the island at a rate that must have been a source of astonishment to the usually sedate animal.

He kept his promise, too, and drove on to the ferry wharf just in time for Judd to jump on the

already moving boat as she left on her half-past three o'clock trip. At four o'clock, therefore, he was in the city, and running up to Thames Street, he hurried around to the wharf of the Providence and Newport Steamboat Company, where he had noticed that a tug with her steam up was lying.

As he turned off from the street onto the passage-way leading to the wharf he saw just ahead of him Mr. Avery, the constable. Quickening his pace to a run, Judd overtook him.

"Mr. Avery," he exclaimed, "where are you going?"

"Home on the next boat," replied Mr. Avery, shaking hands with the lad, "and while I was waiting for the boat I walked around here. But did you wish to see me for anything special?"

Drawing him to one side, Judd in a low voice told him of the discovery he had made, and what he had come to the city for.

"Now," he said, "I want you to come along with me, if we can agree as to the division of the reward."

"Budd, you say, is in their clutches, and he certainly deserves one share; you ought to have a second for your discovery; and I a third, for going with you, chartering the tug, running a risk of the capture, and assuming the legal responsibility of the arrest. How does that strike you?" asked Mr. Avery, with the tones of a man who wanted to do the fair thing.

"Agreed; and we have no time to lose," responded

Judd. "There is a tug right below here with her steam up."

Two minutes later the officer and lad stood on the dock looking down into a neat and trim tug, named the Thetis.

"Ho! ho!" exclaimed Mr. Avery as he read her name. "I know her captain, and I wonder where he is."

"Right here, Avery," exclaimed a voice behind them. "What do you wish?"

They turned to see a great six-footer coming toward them, and as he reached the dock he went on:

"I thought it was you, Avery, as I came down the street behind you. How are you all at home?"

"Very well, Captain Bradley," replied Mr. Avery.

Then he introduced Judd, and proceeded to state his business.

The stalwart captain pulled his beard vigorously as the officer told his story, and then he said, heartily:

"I'm your man, Avery. Steam is up, and we can be off in five minutes. If we don't catch the rascals you are to give me twenty dollars; if we do, make it one hundred."

Mr. Avery, after consulting with Judd, agreed to this, and then he suggested putting on a number of extra men.

"Well, of course I will, if you want them," said the captain; "but I have three men beside myself, and I'm good for any two of those rascals. You

and the boy make six in all. We have two guns and two revolvers on board, and if you will wait five minutes I'll borrow a couple more;" and as Mr. Avery nodded his approval, he disappeared around the corner of an adjacent building.

In the specified time he returned with revolvers and a Winchester rifle.

"I happened to think that this," holding out the rifle, "was up here in an office, and brought it along also," he exclaimed. "It may come handy if we have to back off and take the robbers at long range."

But while this large collection of deadly weapons may have been wise it was hardly necessary, as the sequel will prove.

It was not far from half-past four o'clock when the tug left the wharf. She steamed rapidly around the lighthouse, and down by Fort Adams to the mouth the of bay.

Mr. Avery and Judd stood on her bow, looking eagerly off toward the great expanse of ocean opening up to their view. Both were confident that if the burglars had ever intended to go over to Block Island their plan would be changed on discovering that Budd knew them. The question of greatest moment to them, then, was, had the Sea Witch, on leaving the bay, gone to the east or to the west? for they were sure she had already had time enough to reach the open sea. Their hope was, and to this end the tug was pushed rapidly forward, that they might reach Beaver Tail before the sloop had entirely disappeared.

"Do you suppose they have carried Budd off as a prisoner?" asked Judd of Mr. Avery as they stood there together.

He asked the question with much anxiety, for there had been a growing fear at his heart that a worse calamity might have befallen his chum.

"It depends largely upon how he came to fall into their hands," said Mr. Avery, slowly. "If they have watched for him, and purposely enticed him away, the probabilities are that he is on board the sloop, and that they will dispose of him in such a way that he cannot be traced. By your tale, this Bagsley is equal to so serious a crime. On the other hand, if that Wilson hired him ignorantly, and not until they reached the island, where his companions were, was it known who he really was, then I am inclined to think they have left him on the island, but bound in such a way that he cannot escape until rescued by his friends. This would give them ample time to get out of the way with their booty before he could give an alarm, and is probably the thing they have done. But we cannot really tell until we overhaul them.

"If I were asked to give my idea of the burglars' plans from beginning to end," the officer went on with a smile, "it would be about this: Wilson, and the other robber you did not know, have been the forerunners of the other men, and have doubtless hung about the village for some time, locating the store and planning for the robbery. Bagsley and his gang came to Fox Island intending to make that

a rendezvous until their confederates notified them everything was ready; but finding that was inhabited, they went to Hope Island and robbed Mr. Johnson's house of all that they needed to make a camping outfit, and have been all the time on Patience Island, waiting for their allies' message. When it came, they dropped over to the village, gutted the store, and returned with one of their confederates to Patience Island, while the other, Wilson, remained behind to see what effect the robbery had on the community, and what efforts were put forth to find the criminals. If, in his judgment, it seemed best to leave the neighborhood, he was to hire a boat to take them as a camping-party over to Block Island, where they would have quietly separated and sought places of safety.

"When Wilson appeared, however, bringing a lad who knew one of their number, they were forced to plan differently, and so they ran away with the sloop, intending doubtless to go to some quiet nook up or down the coast, scuttle her, and then disappear without leaving a clew as to the direction they had gone. But here we are, rounding out into the ocean; and now where is your boat?"

Anxiously Judd scanned the surface of the water to the westward. Numerous sails of all sizes were discernible as far as Point Judith, but not one of them, he was sure, could be the Sea Witch. If the burglars had gone in that direction they had already disappeared around the distant point. But to have sailed that way would have been against a strong

southwest wind, necessitating constant tacking, and as fast a sailer as the sloop was, Judd was confident she had not had time enough to accomplish that feat. He therefore turned at once, and hopefully, to scan the eastern horizon. His look was but for a moment; then he exclaimed, triumphantly:

"There she is, Mr. Avery."

He pointed out a small sloop about two miles away, which was sailing due east.

"Has the captain a glass?" he then asked; "though without one I am quite positive she is the sloop," he added, quickly.

A glass was brought him, and adjusting it to his eye, he looked long and anxiously at the retreating boat.

"One, two, three, four," he counted, slowly. "Ah! yes, there is the fifth man 'way forward; and the color and rig of the vessel make it sure she is the Sea Witch"

Captain Bradley stood beside him, and at his words gave the requisite orders for the course of the tug to be changed. Fresh fuel was thrown on her fires, and with full steam on she bounded off toward the distant sloop at a high rate of speed.

CHAPTER XVII.

BUDD'S ESCAPE.

AS BUDD watched the retreating forms of the robbers, so unceremoniously abandoning him on Patience Island, he was very far from being disposed to grumble at his fate. On the other hand, he felt extremely grateful; for his condition, deplorable as it was, was a great deal better than he had expected it would be when he found he had fallen into Bagsley hands. He was, as the captain of the robber-gang had declared, alive and in good health, and he knew he could hold out until his absence should alarm Judd and send him to his rescue, even if he could not free himself. But of this latter he did not yet despair; for while lying in the yawl, waiting for the decision of the burglars as to what should be done with him, he had found he could slightly work his wrists in the cords that bound them, and he hoped, after some effort, to get them free. But lest the men should at the last moment of their departure take a notion to revisit him, he decided to make no effort in this direction until sure he was alone.

Around about him he could see the evidences of an encampment, and he quickly concluded that this had

been the rendezvous of Bagsley and his companions since robbing Mr. Johnson's house on Hope Island. Their tent could not have been seen by anyone passing up or down the bay, and so they ran very little risk of discovery, while they were sufficiently near the scene of their robbery to easily communicate with their confederates, for such he now knew Wilson and the other strangers to be. But it was not until later that Budd learned that Mr. Johnson's house had been made to furnish the principal essentials of the burglars' camping outfit.

Budd now wondered which way the villians would go with the sloop, for he felt sure the Block Island plan had been abandoned. If they went down the bay, Judd, whom he knew was at the fish-pounds, would be likely to see them, and a great hope came to the bound lad that his partner might recognize the fleeing robbers; for he then knew Judd would at once suspect their plans and try to capture them. This hope now became his inspiration and his prayer.

But he did not mean for a single instant to give up his own efforts to escape and to warn the proper authorities of his discovery; for Budd was not thinking so much of the reward that had been offered for the apprehension of the burglars as he was of the bringing of them to justice, and thus securing a hold upon Bagsley. Still, first in his thoughts was the releasing of his father and the vindication of his name.

He had been bound with his hands in front of

him, tied simply at the wrists. He had been secured to the tree by wrappings of the cord from his feet to his shoulders, and the knot that held the cord was on the opposite side of the tree. His first effort was, then, to slip the rope from his wrists. This he accomplished after quite a struggle, that bruised and lacerated his arms and hands until they bled.

His next effort was to raise his arms up out from the wrappings of the cord that bound him to the tree. First the right, then the left arm was released, and to Budd's satisfaction he found their release loosened the cord so that he could move himself a little in his wrappings. Had he only had his jack-knife, the question of release would have been decided in a moment; but this he had lost in his struggle with Wilson on the sloop's deck. He must, then, find some other way to remove the rope.

The ground where the tree stood was uneven, being higher where he was than on the opposite side of the tree. Could he not, then, work slowly about the tree inside of his wrappings until he could with his right hand reach the knot that secured the rope? He knew it must be slow work, and he must be sure the rope did not turn with him, or else his efforts would be in vain. He determined to make the attempt.

First he strained his wrappings to their fullest extent, and then, before they could slip back against him, he made a sudden hitch to the right. He thought he gained a trifle, and thus encouraged, he tried again. Once, twice, ten, fifty times he re-

peated the effort, and then he knew he had gained. Objects had been brought into vision that he had not seen when first bound to the tree; objects he had seen were now lost to view.

All that afternoon, with frequent intervals of rest, he kept up his struggle, and just at dark he found he could touch the end of the rope that formed the knot, and a thrill of joy filled his heart. A few minutes later he was able to take a full, strong hold upon this end of the rope, and from that moment his progress was accelerated. Then, tired, aching in every bone, with his coat worn threadbare by its constant rubbing against the tree, he at length reached a place where he could use both hands upon the knot and untie it. To unwind the wrappings was now but a few minutes' work, and somewhere about six hours after he had been fastened to the tree he found himself free again.

It was, however, too dark for him to attempt to leave the island, or to search out a way to leave it; and so, crawling under the shelter of the great rock from behind which the robbers had first appeared that afternoon, he, without supper and without covering, laid himself down to sleep.

It was a restless, wakeful sleep, and with the very first show of morning light Budd was astir. He first ran up and down the shore until his quickened blood brought warmth to his chilled body; for though it was summer weather, there had been a dampness and low temperature in the sea air sufficient to make him uncomfortable. Then he sought

along the beach for some signs of shell-fish, and soon found clinging to the rocks some yellow mussels. Though not the most delicious of bivalves he managed to swallow a dozen or two of them, and their sharp, peppery taste served as a stimulant. A drink of brackish water from a tiny stream trickling down a rock into the sea completed his breakfast.

As the sun rose, Budd's spirits rose with it, and he searched the island completely around for some log or plank, on which he could venture to leave the island. He was not successful in his search, however, and finally came back to his starting-point empty-handed.

"I've got to swim for it," he commented, "and if I do that, Prudence Island should be my landing-place. Once there, I can get food, and doubtless a boat to take me over to the west shore."

With these words he walked along to the south-east point of the island, and looked across to its nearest and larger neighbor.

"It would not be much of a swim if I had a decent breakfast to work upon," he said to himself; "but I shall have to wait until I get over there before I get it.

"I presume I might wait awhile, and some boat would come along and take me off," he went on, gazing up and down the bay. "But the quickest way is to depend on myself, and it is time I was going, if I am going to put any one on Bagsley's track. I wonder where Judd is, and if he has started to look me up?"

There was no one to answer his question, and he did not stop long to deliberate.

Taking off his clothes, he wrapped them in as small a bundle as possible, and tying them together with his suspenders he fastened them on top of his head. He then entered the water, and swam slowly across the narrow channel that separated him from Prudence Island. He was quite used up when he crawled out on the beach and began to dress himself. Then he walked down along the narrow neck of land that is at the north end of the island until he came to a farm-house, where he stopped and asked for food.

He simply told the farmer that he had got left on Patience Island, and had remained there all night; that he had with the coming morning swam across to that island, and would like, first, some food, and then to secure a boat to take him across to the main shore. The farmer at once asked him into breakfast, which was already upon the table, but told him he would have to go farther down the island to obtain a boat.

Budd accepted the kind invitation, and ate with relish the food put before him; and if the greatest compliment that can be paid a housewife is to show an appreciation of her cookery, then that farmer's wife received from Budd that morning a stupendous compliment.

He had a little money with him, and on leaving he offered to pay his host for the breakfast; but the man refused.

"I may be in the same box some day," he remarked, "and if I'm not, some one else may be whom you can help. So just pass the favor on to him."

Budd readily promised to do this, and with a hearty "Thank you" for his entertainment, hurried down the shore.

His breakfast had given him new strength, his bath in the cool salt water had soothed his bruised and aching body, and he felt equal to almost his usual amount of work. When, therefore, he stopped at the house where he had been told he could secure a boat and received the reply:

"I can let you have a boat, but you will have to row yourself over, and bring back the boat at your earliest convenience, for we are too busy to spare a single hand," he accepted the offer.

The farmer accompanied him down to the shore, and showing him which boat he was to take, cautioned him about being sure to return it. Budd assured the man that he need have no fears on that score; but he little knew how soon he was to return it.

Shoving off the boat, he embarked upon it and rowed rapidly out into the bay. Hope Island was plainly visible to the west, and he shaped his course so as to pass the south end of it, for he had no desire to visit Mr. Johnson again. Yet he of his own accord was in an hour to land there and hold a remarkable interview with that gentleman. So little is it that we really know what we shall do from hour to hour.

Half the distance between the two islands had been accomplished, and Budd had a clear, uninterrupted view down between Prudence and Conanicut Islands into the east bay. His first glance in that direction filled him with sheer amazement, for just emerging from the east passage, and coming directly toward him, was a sloop, and even at that distance he had no difficulty in recognizing her as the Sea Witch. He could see but two persons upon her, and yet there might be more in the cabin. Was it the burglars returning to carry out some forgotten or newly-formed purpose, and should he flee from them as for his life? Or had Judd, as he had hoped and prayed, rescued the sloop from the robbers' hands, and was he now coming to look for his missing chum?

These were questions Budd could not answer, and with a deep misgiving he turned the bow of his boat and rowed directly for Hope Island, believing that it was preferable to meet Mr. Johnson and his hot displeasure to falling again into the hands of Bagsley and his gang.

But before he had rowed half the distance necessary to reach the island the sloop had come up before the morning breeze with a rapidity to be in hailing distance. Then there rang out from her three such yells as only Judd could give; and full of surprise and joy, Budd turned about his boat and went down to meet her.

CHAPTER XVIII.

CAUGHT.

IT WAS in truth the Sea Witch, and in order to understand how she appeared off Hope Island so early that morning we must go back a few hours in our story.

We left Judd and Mr. Avery standing upon the forward deck of the tug Thetis not far from five o'clock the evening before. The tug was off Beaver Tail, and had just sighted and begun her chase after the retreating sloop. The wind was a strong one from the southwest, and the Sea Witch was so rapid a sailer that at six o'clock the tug, though running at a high rate of speed, had not gained over a half-mile upon her. At seven o'clock they were still a mile apart, and it was now evident that before the tug could overhaul her darkness would have closed around.

Lest the suspicion of the burglars might be aroused, Mr. Avery had requested Captain Bradley to keep the tug a point or two off of the exact course of the sloop; so it happened that while the Sea Witch was steadily working up toward the east shore of Buzzard's Bay the Thetis was on a course that would have carried her into Vineyard Sound.

But Cuttyhunk Island was now just ahead, and the tug must soon alter her course or she would lose sight of the sloop.

Captain Bradley was about to give the necessary orders to effect this change, when a movement on the part of the Sea Witch caused him to alter his purpose. Her helm had been thrown up, and swinging to the right, she ran directly into Chuttyhunk Island.

"The rascals are going to hold on there to-night," said the captain as he watched the sloop's course, "or else hold up to a later hour, and then run into the main shore and separate. But whatever their purpose, we have got them. I know like a book the cove they have entered, and we'll keep up the east side of the island and land some one to watch their movements. Before morning I'll promise to bag the whole gang."

A few minutes after the Thetis ran in under the east shore of Cuttyhunk, and a boat landed the captain, Mr. Avery and Judd. Slowly and cautiously, under the lead of the stalwart captain, they made their way across to the west side. Here they found a little cove, and close inshore, and sheltered by its curving arms, lay the Sea Witch at anchor. A light was in her cabin, and a boat with two men in it was just pushing off from her side.

"We are just in time, and may learn something to our advantage," whispered the captain, as he drew his companions back into the shelter of a clump of trees.

The boat from the sloop landed almost directly opposite the concealed men, and the two robbers jumped out and pulled it farther up the beach.

"There," said one, "that will stay there until we come back. The captain said we would find the water down here to the right. Take the bucket and come on."

The man addressed took a pail from the boat and followed the speaker down the shore.

"That proves that the leader of the gang is acquainted with this cove, and their coming here was intentional," remarked Captain Bradley in an undertone as the men disappeared. "Fifty yards to the south is a small spring, but a man must have been here before to know of it. So much then we have learned, and we may get some more important facts out of these fellows before they go back to the sloop."

Soon the men came back to their boat, one bringing the bucket of water, and the other an armful of dead sticks he had gathered up. Putting their burdens into the boat, they sat down upon the bow, filled their pipes, and lighting them began to smoke, evidently in no hurry to depart.

"I say, Tom," said one of them in a moment, "do you suppose we are going to get out of this scrape all right?" and there was apprehension in his voice.

"Oh! I think so," carelessly answered the other. "I see no reason to believe we are even suspected; and to-morrow we will run down in the neighborhood of Hyannis, wait until after dark, then scuttle

the sloop, and separate. From different stations in that vicinity we can work into Boston, and once there, dispose of the booty, divide up, and be off to some other part of the country for another job. It's a good, stiff haul we've made this time; a cool thousand apiece."

"That is Bagsley," Judd said to his companions in a suppressed whisper.

The burglars finished their smoke without any further conversation that was of special value to the listeners, and then pushed off the boat and went back to the sloop.

As soon as they were out of hearing Judd turned to Captain Bradley and asked:

"Couldn't we bring your yawl across to this cove, captain?"

"I think so. What then?" he asked, with interest.

"Well, then let us go back to the tug and give your men orders to bring her around to this side of the island, and lie in wait off the southern point of the cove. Then we will return to the shore in the yawl, bring it over here, and wait until the burglars are quiet for the night. At the proper time we will go silently off to the sloop, shut down her hatch, give the tug the signal to come on, and boat and men are ours."

Mr. Avery and the captain discussed the plan at some length. It would involve hard work, but would offer two special advantages: They would approach the sloop from a quarter that danger

would be the least suspected, and hence the chances of success would be materially strengthened. Again, in case of discovery, a force would be on both the sea and the land side of the Sea Witch, and the burglars would be less likely to escape. With a little change in the details, Judd's suggestion was adopted.

The captain went back to the tug and gave orders for her to go around to the other side of the island; he then returned to the shore, and under the united efforts of the trio the yawl was carried over to the cove and safely launched there. Then the lad was sent down to the southern point to watch for the arrival of the tug. When a light was flashed three times in succession from her starboard quarter he was to know that she was in readiness and waiting only for a return signal to steam down into the cove. Going back with this information to Mr. Avery and Captain Bradley, the boat was then to be shoved off and the visit to the sloop made.

Judd reached the point safely and began his watch. A half-hour passed, and then through the darkness he saw the light of the tug for a brief moment as she rounded the southern end of Cuttyhunk and came due north. She came slowly, that as little sound as possible might escape her, and another half-hour elapsed before he received the signal. Then every light about the vessel suddenly went out, and the most watchful observer would not have suspected she was lying in wait there.

Rising from the ground, Judd swiftly but noise-

lessly went along the shore toward the place where his companions were waiting for his return. He had nearly reached the spot where he thought the boat ought to be, when a dark form rose up suddenly before him.

"Captain," he exclaimed, in a low tone.

"Yes," was the reply, and Captain Bradley stepped along to his side. "I thought you were long in coming," he then explained, "and so had started to look you up."

"Has there been any movement on the part of the burglars?" the lad asked, as they now went on to the boat, where they found Mr. Avery.

"None," replied the captain. "We occasionally hear sounds of laughter, and think they are all in the cabin, and the question arises whether we had better go off at once or wait until all is quiet on the sloop."

"They will be likely to set a watch later," said Judd quickly. "If we can run off now and get under the starboard side of the sloop without being discovered, I will agree to shut down the hatch and fasten it before a single one can escape. We shall then have them at a disadvantage, and can compel them to come out one by one, and disarm and bind them."

"Well, we will try it," was the decision of his companions, and the boat was pushed off and slowly sculled by Captain Bradley toward the sloop.

Mr. Avery sat amidships, while Judd occupied the extreme bow. All had their revolvers in readiness

and were alert for the very first indication that they had been discovered.

Silently the boat approached the sloop, which swung bow toward it. In and under the shadow cast even in the darkness by her bow the yawl swiftly shot, and then stopped. The voices of the burglars could be distinctly heard, and they were evidently making the night ring with their songs and laughter. Sounds of drinking and feasting suggested, also, that they were still at their supper. No one was on deck, and no thought of capture had apparently come to the robbers' minds.

Again the yawl moved silently forward, and paused under the starboard quarter of the sloop, and just adjacent to her cabin. Judd knew his time for action had come, and he arose and braced himself for it.

The opening into the cabin was for convenience and ventilation made in two parts—one upright, the other horizontal. The upright portion was a door, and swung upon hinges from the starboard side of the cabin toward its larboard end. The horizontal part was a sliding hatch at the top of the cabin, and to close it, it had to be shoved toward the stern-end of the cabin, directly over the upright, where it fastened down into its place with an iron clamp. Both swinging door and sliding hatch were made of solid wood, and when closed and fastened could not easily be opened from the inside of the cabin.

All this Judd knew; and he was, moreover, at the one point where he could reach both parts that

were to be closed without himself being seen. For a brief moment he steadied himself on the bow of the yawl; then laying one hand on the rail of the sloop, he jumped lightly on board. His weight swayed the craft somewhat, but before the burglars, surprised at the sudden lurch, could spring even to their feet, he had reached the opening. In an instant his left hand swung-to the upright door and his right hand shoved the slide into place; down came the clamp with a jerk; the iron bar was thrust into the socket, and all was secure before the burglars had recovered from their first shock of surprise.

Loud curses now followed, and heavy blows were struck upon the closed door. Then a voice cried:

"Open that hatch, or we'll fire through it!" and the click of a revolver was heard.

"Two can play at that game, my hearties," rang out the voice of the stalwart captain as he sprung on board, followed by Mr. Avery.

Then he drew his revolver and fired twice in the air. It was the signal for the tug to approach.

These movements on the part of the captors were not without their effect on the imprisoned men. A silence suddenly fell upon them, broken at length by the leader of the gang asking:

"Who are you, and what do you mean by closing us up in here? You will find it is a joke we will not stand."

"And you will find it is no joke at all," responded Mr. Avery, promptly. "I am an officer in pursuit

Grasping hold of the sides of the yawl Budd saw that the porpoise was going down the bay at a terrific rate of speed, with the boat in tow.—(See page 224.)

of you on three or four charges, the last and least of which is running away with this sloop. We have a tug close at hand, and outnumber you in men and weapons, as well as in the advantage of situation. So I advise you to keep perfectly quiet."

The sound of the approaching tug was plainly discernible, to confirm his words, and silence again fell on the discomfited burglars.

"We are in Massachusetts waters; how dare you trouble us?" one of the men, after awhile, called out.

"I believe a man has a right to his property wherever he finds it," responded Mr. Avery, coolly; "and one of the owners of this sloop is on board now. We are just going to hitch on to the craft, at his request, and tow her home. It is your misfortune to be in her just at this time, but we cannot stop now to let you get off. As to your arrest, we'll see to that when we are in Rhode Island waters."

The tug had now come alongside of the captured vessel, and her anchor was weighed and she was lashed to the larger boat, so that a passage from one to the other could be easily made. Then the word was given, and the Thetis steamed rapidly off on her return.

When out so far from land that any escape of the prisoners was impossible, the door of the sloop's cabin was unfastened, and the men were ordered out one by one. Bagsley and the leader of the gang showed a little disposition to fight at first, but when their three comrades yielded they evidently thought

discretion the better part of valor, and sullenly obeyed.

Each one, as he came out, was disarmed and bound; then all were returned to the cabin of the sloop. Bagsley, when he first caught sight of Judd Floyd, seemed to think that he was Budd Boyd, but learned his mistake at once when he was questioned as to Budd's whereabouts, and angrily refused to tell. One of his companions, however, revealed that the lad had been left bound on Patience Island, and Mr. Avery consented, at Judd's urgent request, to visit the island early in the morning and release Budd.

At midnight, or a little after, the Thetis was in Newport. A strong guard was placed over the captured men, and Mr. Avery and Judd took possession of two of the tug's bunks, and slept soundly until early morning. Then a breakfast was furnished the prisoners one by one, after which they were again bound securely and replaced in the cabin of the sloop. Mr. Avery drew his check for one hundred dollars and gave it to Captain Bradley; then he and Judd entered the sloop and set sail for Patience Island.

As they came out of the east passage they saw a boat with a single occupant crossing over from Prudence Island toward the south end of Hope, and the moment it turned and was pulled rapidly for the latter Judd suspected who the occupant was. When a little nearer, he was sure it was Budd, whom he was seeking, and who had in some way escaped

from his bonds; so he sent forth the three yells that he knew his partner would recognize, and which caused him to turn about, and with both surprise and joy come on to meet the approaching sloop; a surprise and joy that was destined to merge into a feeling of triumph when he learned what and whom the sloop contained.

CHAPTER XIX.

MR. JOHNSON IS ASTONISHED.

THE Sea Witch was luffed up into the wind as Budd came alongside, and in another moment he had leaped on board of her, and was shaking hands with his chum and with the constable. A single glance through the open door of the cabin now revealed to him the prisoners, and too full of happiness at the sudden revelation to speak, he turned toward Judd an inquiring look.

"Yes," he said proudly, at once interpreting his partner's look, and understanding something of his feelings, "we have got the burglars, their booty, and all their traps."

"Tell me about it," Budd managed to say.

"No, your story comes first," remonstrated Judd.

So Budd began with his meeting of Mr. Wilson at the village the afternoon before, and told all he had passed through until he had run in with the sloop. When he had done, Judd and Mr. Avery together gave him a full account of the chase and capture of the burglars from the moment that Judd had discovered them running away with the Sea Witch.

Then Judd said:

"We were on our way up to Patience Island to release you, after which we were going into Hope Island to notify Mr. Johnson of the burglars' capture. Mr. Avery thinks much of the camping stuff they have was taken from his house, and that he may wish to bring action against them simultaneously with Clapp & St. John. Now that we have met you, however, we are saved the trip up to Patience, and we will go directly over to Hope Island."

"Run over to Prudence and let me return this boat first," said Budd. "I don't need it now, and it will save a trip over here on purpose to bring it."

"So it will," assented Judd; and the sloop was headed in that direction.

The farmer was surprised to have his boat returned within a half-hour of the time it had been taken, but opened his eyes in wider astonishment when Mr. Avery, who was acquainted with him, gave him a full account of Budd's experiences and showed him the prisoners.

The run across to Hope Island was made in less than another half-hour, and Budd, at the request of his companions, who knew he had special reasons for seeing Mr. Johnson, landed and went up toward that gentleman's residence.

As he approached the building he could not help noticing the changes that had taken place since he was there scarcely a week before. The shutters were off of the house, windows were open, lawns were mown, chairs and settees were out on the

veranda, and everywhere there were signs of occupancy.

Walking boldly up to the front door, Budd rang the bell. A servant answered his ring, and the lad politely asked her if Mr. Johnson was at home.

"Yes, sir," she replied; and then, evidently thinking from the boy's appearance he was looking for work, she added, "but he has all the help he desires."

Budd smiled a little.

"I do not wish work, but desire to see Mr. Johnson on important business," he replied, with a marked emphasis on the next to the last word.

"Who shall I tell him wishes to see him?" the girl asked, doubtfully.

"A gentleman," answered Budd, fearing to give his own name, and thus be refused an interview with the man he sought.

The girl hesitatingly showed Budd into the reception-room and went off to call her master.

With some doubts as to the reception he should receive, but elated at the revelations he had to make, the lad arose to meet Mr. Johnson as he entered. Before he could speak a word, however, he was recognized, and the gentleman exclaimed, angrily:

"Budd Boyd! How dare you enter my house, sir?"

"I have business with you, Mr. Johnson," Budd replied gravely, and with dignity.

Something in his quiet tones and self-possessed

manner soothed Mr. Johnson's anger, and he asked, shortly:

"What is it?"

"May I sit down, sir? I have several most astonishing revelations to make," said Budd, noticing the impression he had made.

Mr. Johnson without a word motioned the boy to a chair, and taking one near by, waited for him to speak.

"Do you remember the conversation I had with you about Thomas H. Bagsley, when in your office last March?" Budd now asked.

"I do," said the gentleman addressed, briefly and haughtily.

"You may remember that as I left your office he entered, making it evident that he had been listening to our conversation," continued the lad.

"What makes you think so?" asked Mr. Johnson with a start, and for the first time beginning to show an interest in the conversation.

"Because of his own words and threats to me the next morning," responded Budd; and he rapidly described the altercation that then occurred.

"I immediately left the city," he went on, "and did not see Bagsley again until a week ago last Saturday evening. But meanwhile he left your employ."

"Yes," assented Mr. Johnson, "he was thoroughly incompetent for his duties; and, then"—he hesitated a moment, but eventually finished his sentence—"and, then, I felt I could not trust him."

"Your fears were well grounded," said Budd, with a little secret exultation over Mr. Johnson's admission.

Then he described the visit of Bagsley and his two companions to Fox Island, and the statements and declarations he and his partner had overheard.

"It was this visit to our island, Mr. Johnson, that sent me over to your island last Wednesday, when I was so unfortunate as to place myself in your hands and be arrested as the party who had robbed your house," he added.

"That does nicely for a story," replied Mr. Johnson, incredulously; "but if true, why didn't you at once tell me, or make it known at least at your trial? It looks altogether like an ingenious attempt on your and your partner's part to get me to withdraw my charge against you."

Budd laughed.

"I admit it, sir," he said; "but if you remember, I did beg you to hear my story, and had you consented I should have told you all this at that time. In the court I did not wish to tell it, for I had another purpose in mind;" and he rapidly explained to Mr. Johnson what he hoped to achieve from Bagsley's arrest, and that he was fearful, if he had disclosed what he did know about his enemy and his gang at the time of his own trial, it would have been premature and would have thwarted his purpose.

Mr. Johnson listened respectfully, but at the close of Budd's lengthy explanation declared he was not

yet convinced of the truth of the lad's statements.

"I am not through," said Budd with another laugh, for he knew the proofs of the truth of all his declarations were not many rods away. "You have heard of the extensive robbery of Clapp & St. John's store over at the village?" he now asked.

"Yes, I heard of it last evening," Mr. Johnson admitted.

"That robbery was committed by Bagsley and his gang, and they robbed your house here," said Budd, quietly.

"How do you know? Where are the proofs of your statement?" cried Mr. Johnson, springing excitedly to his feet. "Prove that to me, and I will withdraw my case against you before sunset!" and he walked up and down the room like a man about to receive some unpleasant revelation.

"And try with me to secure Bagsley's confession of the crime he committed, and for which my father is now in prison?" asked Budd, with scarcely a less show of excitement.

Mr. Johnson paused in front of the lad and looked at him sharply for a minute; but the lad did not flinch under his gaze.

"Yes," he then said, firmly; "I promise that, also. Prove to me those two things—that the robbery here and the one in the village were alike committed by a gang of burglars of which Bagsley is one, and I shall believe he was capable—yes, guilty—of the crime your father stands charged with to-day; for,

mark, I now admit that there are reasons to believe that he did, at the time that act was committed, know the combination to my safe, and thus had free access to my money and my check-book.

"I now confess to you that I let my copy of the combination-number lie overnight on my private office desk, and though it was lying there undisturbed the next morning, Bagsley may have seen it. This is why I have distrusted him.

"It has also been a secret that has accused me every time I thought of your father and of you. I could not bear to think I had sent an innocent person to prison, and a part of my severity to you has grown out of the fact that if you were proved to be of a thievish disposition it would seem to substantiate, in a measure at least, your father's guilt. It was at least quieting to my conscience to have it prove so, and for this I doubtless have too strongly worked against you.

"So I say, only prove your statements, and instead of your enemy I am your friend, and I pledge you that I will try to undo all the wrong I have done your father and yourself," and there was an earnestness and sincerity in his tones that convinced Budd that he meant just what he said.

"Mr. Johnson," he exclaimed, "get your hat and come with me."

"Where?" he asked.

"Down to your dock. My sloop, the Sea Witch, is there, and on board are the five burglars, their booty from the store and from your house, guarded

by Mr. Avery, the constable, and my partner, Judd Floyd."

Mr. Johnson looked at the lad for an instant as though he doubted his sanity; then he led the way into the hall, took his hat and a stout cane from the rack, and replied:

"I'm ready."

As they walked down to the wharf, Budd rapidly related the principal events connected with the finding and capture of the burglars, and exhibited his own lacerated wrists as proof of the part he had borne in the affair.

"I'm just astonished! I'm just astonished!" was Mr. Johnson's ejaculation during this recital.

They reached the sloop, and Mr. Johnson looked with his own eyes upon Bagsley and his confederates. He even overhauled and identified much among their traps as having been taken from his house.

He then had Mr. Avery and the lads recount to him again the whole story of the robbers' capture. He also listened respectfully to Mr. Avery's suggestion that he should come over to the village, and identifying there his property, swear out a warrant against the men, that a double charge might be sustained against them.

"I will do it," he replied. "I will come over immediately."

He spoke to Bagsley, expressing regret at having found him such a criminal, but received only curses in return.

At length he seemed to be satisfied with his own investigations, and with the story he had heard.

Laying his hand on Budd's head he said, solemnly:

"I never meant to wrong you at all, my dear lad. I never meant to send your innocent father, for I feel instinctively now he is innocent, to prison. I never meant to hasten your invalid mother's death. Tell me you forgive me, lad, for unless you do I can never forgive myself."

Tears streamed down Budd's cheeks, and with them went much of the anger he had cherished toward the speaker.

"I believe you," he said; "only, leave no stone unturned to set my father free and to put him right in the eyes of the world, and I freely forgive you all the suffering and unhappiness you have unintentionally caused me."

"I solemnly promise it; and believe me there is yet happiness for both father and son," said Mr. Johnson fervently; and wiping his own eyes, he went ashore, to complete his arrangements for visiting the village.

And Budd, with a joy he could not tell, assisted his chum in getting the sloop ready for the passage over to the main land, where their arrival with their prisoners was to create a profound sensation, and win for himself and partner not only the offered reward, but friends and fame.

CHAPTER XX.

THE CONFESSION.

THE burglars are captured!" "They are now in the lock-up!" "Avery, the constable, and those boys of Fox Island, brought them here in the Sea Witch!" "They say every dollar's worth of the stolen goods is recovered!" "The examination is at two o'clock this afternoon!"

These and a hundred other similar exclamations ran along the streets of the village, were repeated in shop and store and house, discussed on the street-corners, and carried out into the surrounding country, within two hours after the sloop had tied up at the public wharf.

And yet very little was really known, for on arriving at the dock Mr. Avery had left the sloop and prisoners in charge of the two lads while he went quietly up the street and sought an interview with Clapp & St. John, the jewelers. The immediate outcome of that interview was that two closely-covered carriages were driven down to the wharf, and the prisoners were hastily put into these and driven rapidly up to the lock-up, where they were quickly incarcerated. Almost as quickly, a huge express wagon went down to the dock, and bags, gripsacks

and bundles, containing the robbers' booty and traps, were transferred from the sloop to the waiting vehicle, covered with a large sail-cloth, and driven off to Clapp & St. John's place of business, where they were safely stored. Then warrants were sworn out in rapid succession by Clapp & St. John, by Mr. Johnson, for he had arrived at the village almost as soon as the Sea Witch, and by the lads themselves, against the criminals.

Just what the specific charges were, and how the burglars had been found, was not generally known; but enough had been seen by the inhabitants of that staid community to excite their curiosity, and to set their tongues a-wagging with a velocity that in any other bodily member would have been absolutely dangerous.

So it happened that when the hour of the burglars' examination came a crowd had gathered in the court-room that filled it to its utmost capacity, and a larger crowd was in the court-yard and the adjacent street. Through this assembly the prisoners were with great difficulty taken, and their trial began.

But if the eager audience were expecting any special developments they were doomed to disappointment, for when the warrant charging the prisoners with feloniously entering and robbing Clapp & St. John's store was read, each burglar in his turn waived examination, and was bound over, without bonds, to the higher court.

Something of a surprise swept over the audience,

however, when the prisoners were again arraigned and a second warrant was read, charging them with the buglary of Mr. Johnson's house on Hope Island. To this, as in the first instance, the accused responded by waiving an examination, and were again bound over, without bonds, to the next term of the superior court.

Many of the audience evidently thought this ended the judicial proceedings, and they arose to leave the room. The prisoners, too, apparently thought the same, for they turned toward the officers who were guarding them as though expecting to be immediately taken away.

But for the third time they were called to the bar, and a deathlike stillness fell upon the throng as a third warrant was read, charging three of the prisoners with having forcibly entered, with the intent of robbing, the house on Fox Island, on Saturday night, June 17th. Then there was a hurried consultation between the leader of the gang, who had given the name of Brill, and Bagsley and the third man of the party who was accused of this crime, and who answered to the name of Hawkins.

The result of the consultation was that the three men for the third time waived an examination, and for the third time were bound over to the higher court.

As though getting impatient with the whole proceedings, the Justice immediately called the five men to the bar to listen to the reading of a fourth warrant, which charged the entire party with

"having taken the sloop Sea Witch, with force of arms, from her lawful owner, and having, with great detriment to said owner's bodily health and disadvantage to his property and business, run off with the same." With hopeless faces and sinking hearts the prisoners no longer waived an examination but pleaded guilty to the charge, and, as on the three former charges, were bound over to the superior court.

While the audience was slowly dispersing, the papers for the commitment of the prisoners to the county jail were filled out by the presiding Justice, and then, under a strong guard, they were taken out to the waiting carriages and driven rapidly off toward the county-seat. Before sunset this had been reached, and the criminals placed in separate cells within the strong walls of the jail.

Mr. Johnson and Budd had both agreed that it would be wiser to postpone their interview with Bagsley until he had been committed to jail and knew the full consequences of the criminal acts with which he and his confederates had been charged. They hoped, too, that his solitary confinement might subdue his resentful spirit to such an extent that he would be willing to listen to the proposition they had to make. They therefore arranged to go up to Kingston together early in the coming week for the interview, on which their hopes so largely centered. But unknown to them a series of circumstances were already beginning to work in their behalf.

The first step in the series began right in the

court-room. While the audience was dispersing and the Justice was filling out the commitment-papers the prisoners were huddled close together within the court-room railing. The officers allowed them to converse together, thinking, doubtless, it would be the last time they could do so for a number of weeks, if not for a number of years. Brill, the leader of the gang, changed his position a little so as to bring him beside Bagsley, and then he said, in a low tone:

"It is a hard outlook for us, Tom."

"Yes," his companion replied, gloomily.

"It can't be less than twenty years on all the charges," continued Brill, cautiously, lest his words should be overheard by the attending officers.

"Do you think so?" asked Bagsley.

"Yes, unless you can work on the sympathies of old Johnson and that boy to let us off on some of the charges," remarked the leader, significantly.

"What do you mean? They are more bitter against me than all the rest of you," responded Bagsley, with some irritation in his tones.

"Yes, and for cause; but suppose you remove that cause?" said Brill, pointedly.

"And get myself in a worse scrape," snapped Bagsley.

"Not necessarily; you can put your conditions, and help yourself and the rest of us," was the hasty reply; for the papers were now completed, and the officers were handcuffing the prisoners together previous to leading them from the room.

Enough had been said, however, to excite in Bagsley's heart a hope he would not be slow to follow up.

The next step in the series of circumstances working favorably for the fulfillment of Budd's purpose occurred the next day, way off among the hills of New Hampshire. Bagsley, it will be remembered, was known, and however it may have been with his companions, he was not able to conceal his identity under a false name. The newspapers, therefore, recording the capture of the burglars, gave his name in full; and one of those papers went into the boyhood home of the unfortunate man, carrying dismay to his aged father and mother still abiding there. The name was that of their only son, from whom they had not heard in long months, and of whose career they had for a long time had misgiving.

So the aged father sat down, and with trembling hand wrote to the keeper of the jail asking for further particulars as to the robbery, and a complete identification, if possible, of the prisoner who bore his son's name. This letter in due time reached the jailer, and was at once taken to Bagsley's cell. He bore up bravely under the words the father had penned, but when he read at the bottom of the sheet a single line in the mother's handwriting—that line reading "If you are our Tommy, let us know at once, and we'll come to you and spare no expense to save you"—he broke completely down. The memory of his mother—of her love, that had

ever stood ready to shield him—had touched his heart. He was not as hardened as he himself had thought, and a desire to see his mother once more before the prison-walls closed upon him for long years, and to hear from her own lips that she forgave her wayward boy, led him to answer his father's letter.

So the third and last step in this chain of circumstances began when his letter, two days later, reached the little mountain village. Closing up their little home, the aged father and mother drew from the savings bank their small hoard of hard-earned money and set out for the place of their son's incarceration. Everyone they met seemed to understand that some heavy affliction had fallen upon the gray-haired couple, and with kind words and willing hands they were helped on their way, and on the Monday following the arrest of the criminals they reached the door of the Kingston jail and asked to see their boy.

Without delay they were taken to Bagsley's cell, and then ensued an interview too sacred but for the angels of heaven to have witnessed. In humble contrition the penitent man disclosed to his broken-hearted parents the whole story of his criminal life, and acknowledged that there was no possible escape from long years of confinement unless Mr. Johnson and Budd Boyd could be persuaded to withdraw their charges against him. So the next morning the father started off to find the lad and the gentleman who held so much of his son's fate in their

hands, and met them on their way up to the county-seat to hold an interview with his son. Under these circumstances it was not hard to effect an agreement, and Bagsley consented to make a full and complete vindication of Henry Boyd if Mr. Johnson's charge and the two charges of Boyd & Floyd against him and his associates were withdrawn. This was what both Mr. Johnson and Budd were willing to do, and the confession of such vital importance to two persons at least—Budd and his father—was duly drawn up and signed.

It stated in substance that Bagsley, on entering Mr. Johnson's employ, had been detected in light pilfering by Mr. Boyd, but upon his making full restitution and promising to never be guilty of such an act again Mr. Boyd had consented to keep the matter from Mr. Johnson. Instead of being grateful to Mr. Boyd for thus shielding him from Mr. Johnson's anger, Bagsley had resolved to have his revenge for what he termed Boyd's unwarranted interference with that which was none of his business. The opportunity came when Mr. Johnson carelessly left the combination-number of the safe upon his private desk. Making a copy of it, Bagsley had taken the thousand dollars for himself, and forged the check and sent it with the accompanying letter to Mr. Boyd's house just as he was about to start for the South with his invalid wife. He had opened and destroyed the letter of thanks that Mr. Boyd had sent Mr. Johnson upon receiving the check, and the result of his plans had been exactly what he had

anticipated. Mr. Boyd was arrested, tried and convicted of the two crimes, forgery and theft, while he who had really committed the acts had been unsuspected.

The confession went on to state that Bagsley had overheard all that passed between Budd and Mr. Johnson in the private office, and believing that Budd was working to prove his guilt he had assaulted him on the next day. Not content with this, he had sought for the lad repeatedly to frighten him into silence, but at length learned he had left the city.

His connection with the criminals had come about in a perfectly natural way through the dissipated habits he had formed. When in a gambling-saloon one night he had run in with Brill, who, finding that Bagsley had plenty of money, accused him of having taken the thousand dollars for which Henry Boyd had been arrested. Bagsley at first denied this, but being unable to account for the money in any other way, he finally admitted it.

From that hour Brill had a hold upon him, and led him from one crime to another until the series of crimes for which he and his companions had now been arrested.

There was a particularity of detail throughout the whole confession that evinced its truth, and with the document in his pocket Mr. Johnson took the first train for Boston, to place in the hands of the Governor and his Council, the matter of Henry Boyd's pardon for a crime he had never committed; while Budd drove off home, to immediately write

and send to his father a letter giving a full account of the events that had transpired in the last few days, and setting forth the prospect of his—the father's—release, as soon as the legal steps necessary for it could be complied with.

As we shall now lose sight of Bagsley in our story, it may be stated here that he and his companions in crime were duly arraigned for the burglary of Clapp & St. John's jewelry store, at the November term of the superior court, and knowing that the evidence of their guilt was absolute, they thought it wiser to plead guilty and throw themselves upon the mercy of the Court. The other charges were not brought up against them, but they were known, and without doubt had much to do with the heavy sentence that was pronounced upon them, namely—ten years each at hard labor in the State Penitentiary.

The reward offered for their arrest and conviction was in due time paid over to Mr. Avery and the two lads. Mr. Avery, finding the part he had played in the affair had obtained for him a popularity that was destined to give him the office of County Sheriff at the next election, magnanimously insisted that the hundred dollars paid the captain of the tug should come out of his portion of the reward alone; so that the young firm received an even thousand dollars as their compensation for the trying experiences they had undergone in discovering and bringing to justice the gang of criminals.

But a full month before this money was paid over, an event happened that to Budd at least far

transcended any amount of pecuniary gain. It was the reception, through the post-office, of a large official document from the Governor of Massachusetts, announcing the full pardon and ordering the immediate release of Henry Boyd. Along with it came a personal note from the Governor pleasantly suggesting that the son, who had so thoroughly believed in and worked for the establishment of the father's innocence, should be the one to first carry the good news to the pardoned man.

CHAPTER XXI.

FATHER AND SON.

THE WEEKS that had elapsed between the confession of Bagsley and the reception of the important document from the Governor of Massachusetts had hung heavily on Budd's hands. He chafed under the legal technicalities that seemed to be constantly arising to delay a result that he knew was inevitable, and which he thought ought to come immediately. Still his hope sustained him, and with his partner he attended strictly to the work in which they were engaged.

Business, too, accumulated upon their hands. The notoriety they had achieved in capturing the burglars had made it quite the thing to patronize the young firm, and from every side there poured into them an increase of trade. The summer hotels along the bay found it quite to their interest to announce that the fish upon their tables came directly from the pounds of Boyd & Floyd. Sailing and fishing-parties sought eagerly for the services of the lads and their sloop Sea Witch, that had such a romantic history. So night and day the young firm were busy, and their bank account grew apace.

But there was another work during these weeks that claimed Budd's attention. Believing that his father would prefer to come back to the island with him, and make a temporary home there until their plans for the future could be arranged, he spent all his spare moments in making his island home more attractive.

Mr. Johnson had on the day he had accompanied the lad up to the county jail returned to him the five hundred dollars he had paid that gentleman the previous March, and, along with that sum, its accumulated interest. A portion of this money Budd now spent for carpets and furniture.

The bedroom down-stairs, and which he and Judd had always occupied, was refurnished expressly for Mr. Boyd. The furniture which had been in there was carried upstairs, where a room was fixed for the lads. Another room upstairs was also furnished with a bedroom set, and it was Budd himself who gave a reason for doing it:

"It is for your father, Judd, when he comes from the State Farm. We'll bring him over here, where he'll be away from temptation, and try and make a man of him;" and Judd thanked his chum for the suggestion with glistening eyes.

Other arrangements were also made about the house and grounds, in which Budd was ably seconded by his partner, and on the October morning that the Governor's pardon came everything was in readiness for Mr. Boyd's coming.

That afternoon's train carried Budd to Boston.

He arrived in the city too late to visit the prison that day, but having expected this, he was in no sense disappointed. In fact he had come to the city at this time purposely, for he had a few items of business to transact before he visited his father, and they could be attended to while he waited for the coming morning, which at the earliest possible hour he had determined should see his father's liberation. These items of business are of interest to us, and so we will follow him as he attends to them.

Hastening through to Washington Street with the pace of one who knew just where he was going, he hurried down that street until he reached a large tailoring establishment. Entering this, he asked for the proprietor, and was immediately shown to the private office. Introducing himself with the air of one who was expected, he asked:

"You have, of course, received and filled my order?"

"Yes sir," said the gentleman, pleasantly, and pointing to a handsome valise and a large package at one side of the office. "In that valise you will find shirts, collars, underwear, stockings, neckties, and a medium suit of clothing. In the package is a handsome overcoat, a fine Prince Albert suit, hat, shoes—in fact a complete outfit, and good enough for any man. They will be sent to your hotel at the appointed hour to-morrow, and we guarantee the fit, if your measures were correct."

Budd thanked him, and then asked:

"Was the check I forwarded with the order sufficiently large in amount to pay for everything?"

"Yes, and a little to spare. Here is the receipted bill and change that the cashier sent here in anticipation of your coming. I had the bundles brought here also, in case you should care to examine them."

"No, sir; I rely upon your judgment," replied the lad. "You may send the packages to me to-night, however, at the United States Hotel;" and he took his leave.

He now walked down to the hotel he had named, and registering his name, was shown to a room.

Before the supper-hour the packages had arrived from the tailoring establishment, and were at his request sent up to his room. He now examined their contents, and his face glowed with satisfaction as he saw how well his orders had been executed.

"Father need not be ashamed to call on the Governor himself with those clothes on," he said softly to himself, not knowing they would be put to that use.

When his supper was eaten he left the hotel and walked briskly off toward the business quarter of the city again, and reaching the office of a well-known daily paper, he entered and asked for the managing editor. On the assurance that his business was important he was shown up to that worthy's sanctum.

With no hesitation he told who he was, and the object of his visit to Boston.

"My wish," he continued, "is to have your paper to-morrow kindly notice my father's return to public

life; and if you believe in his innocence, do your part toward the vindication of his good name. I ask that you will give as conspicuous a place in your paper to his release as you did to his trial and conviction, and am willing to pay you for the space."

The editor laughed a little.

"You show your appreciation of the value of the press as a molder of public sentiment," he then said. "But, my dear boy, Mr. Johnson has preceded you in this request. The first page of every daily in this city, to-morrow, will notice your father's release, and every editorial page will comment upon and welcome his return to public life.

"Why shouldn't we?" he added, bluntly. "Mr. Johnson has paid handsomely for it. He certainly is leaving no stone unturned to restore your father to his old standing in the community. From the hour of Bagsley's confession, for he telegraphed the fact here at once, he has seen to it that every step toward your father's release has been duly noticed by the public press."

Then the man, with a few inquiries as to Mr. Boyd's plans after his release, dismissed his young visitor.

"I have no more offices to visit, then," Budd remarked on reaching the street, "thanks to Mr. Johnson. I'll buy a copy of every paper to-morrow, however, so father can see just what they do say."

He now turned his steps toward the quarter of the city where he had formerly lived, and walked slowly over the familiar ground. Then he went around by

the school he had last attended, and gazed up at the windows of the room where he used to sit. His thoughts now turned toward his former acquaintances and friends, and he felt a little pardonable exultation as he remembered how, at every breakfast-table of the city, on the following morning, his father's innocence would be discussed.

"I am not sure," he admitted to himself, as he walked back toward his hotel, "but that I should be glad to come back here and take up the old life—if," he added, after a brief pause, "Judd could only come with me."

And though he did not know it then, that very thing was to eventually happen.

Not far from half-past eight o'clock the next morning Budd put his packages into a hack, and entering it, gave the order to the driver:

"Go over to the State Prison in Charlestown."

With a peculiar look at his young passenger the driver mounted his box and drove away. A half-hour or so later he stopped at the massive entrance of the institution named, and Budd alighted. Requesting the hackman to remain until his return, he took up his bundles and went into the warden's office.

Upon showing the official document of the Governor to the clerk in waiting he politely requested Budd to take a seat while he went to call his superior officer. The warden soon entered, and telling Budd he had expected him, he led the way into the prison building. Down one corridor and

into another they went, the heart of the lad beating loudly as he drew nearer to the father he had not seen for months. Suddenly the warden stopped before a cell and unlocked the door.

"You may enter and break the news to your father," he said to Budd in a low voice. "A little later I will send a man for you, and you and your father can come down to the office, where there is a dressing-room which he can use to get ready for his departure."

With these words he motioned the lad to enter the cell; then he gently closed the door, without locking it, and hurried away, leaving father and son alone. Surely nothing ever became him better.

As Budd entered the cell, his father arose from the stool on which he was sitting, and with a glad cry came toward him. The next instant they were in each other's arms, and sobbing on each other's shoulders. But the tears they shed were tears of joy, for Mr. Boyd had rightly conjectured that his son's presence meant his immediate release, and though not entirely unexpected, yet it still came with sufficient suddenness to move him to tears.

Soon they both grew calmer, and then Budd produced the Governor's pardon, and related to his father the story of its coming, and the Governor's suggestion that had accompanied it. He then produced a half-dozen morning papers, and pointed out to his father the flaming announcements of his release, and the editorial notes of welcome that signaled his return to public life.

"You need not be ashamed to go anywhere in the city, father," the lad exclaimed, triumphantly; "and I have brought you clothing fit for a king. A home is ready for you, too, where you can rest awhile and plan for the future. There is the man's step outside, now, who has been sent up for us; so come."

Leaning proudly on the arm of his boy, who had accomplished so much, Mr. Boyd walked down to the office, where the warden kindly greeted him, and the few details essential to his release were attended to. Then he was shown into an adjacent dressing-room where the packages Budd had brought had already been carried, and from this he emerged a half-hour later looking, as the happy boy declared, "Just like his own father."

Budd now took up the valise that contained Mr. Boyd's spare clothing, and telling his father the carriage was in waiting, started for the door.

"One moment, Mr. Boyd," the warden said. "Here is a note the Governor has sent here for you."

In surprise, Mr. Boyd took the note and hastily opened it. There was but a brief line.

EXECUTIVE MANSION, October 5th.

Mr. Henry Boyd and Son:—You are both requested to dine with me at two o'clock this afternoon, where you will meet some old and some new friends. THE GOVERNOR.

It was with emotions no words can express that both father and son entered their carriage and were

driven off to their hotel. Never had the sun shone so brightly; never had the autumn foliage looked half so beautiful; never had the old, familiar streets and buildings seemed so dear. In their very happiness they were silent until nearly to their destination; then Mr. Boyd broke the silence by saying, tremulously:

"Oh, Budd! if your mother only knew of my vindication! If she had only lived to see this day!"

"She does know of it," replied Budd, simply.

"I believe it; and, like myself, she is proud of her boy;" and Mr. Boyd looked lovingly down into the face of his son.

The dinner at the Executive mansion was a simple affair, the Governor seeming to understand Mr. Boyd's feelings in this respect. There were there the members of the Executive Council; the Judge who had presided at Mr. Boyd's trial; Mr. Johnson; Mr. Boyd's lawyer, and a half-dozen prominent business men that Mr. Boyd had been accustomed to meet in other days. They all congratulated him warmly upon his established innocence, and assured him of their friendship and help when he had decided upon his future business plans.

He thanked them all for their expressions of kindness, but added, with evident pride:

"My son has a home for me, and there I will go for the present."

At four o'clock he and Budd left the city; at five they were in Providence, and at six they were

at their village depot, where they were met by Judd. Ten minutes later they were on the Sea Witch, bound for the island.

As they reached their own wharf Mr. Boyd stepped out of the boat and looked around him. Then he said tenderly, almost reverently:

"This is your home, Budd, and my home, now—inexpressibly dear, because of what my boy has here proved himself to be."

Later on, and when reclining in an easy-chair beside the sitting-room fire, he heard in detail the experiences through which the lads had passed. The young partners sat where he could look them both full in the face. Possibly their strong likeness to each other may have suggested the question, for he abruptly asked:

"Judd, what is your father's name?"

"Silas Torr Floyd," answered the wondering boy.

"And your mother's?"

"Helen Budd, before she was married," replied Judd. "That is one reason why I thought Budd's name so funny when I first heard it."

"You are, then, cousins," was Mr. Boyd's astonishing declaration.

"How do you make that out, sir?" the lads exclaimed in one breath.

"My wife and your mother, Judd, were sisters," explained Mr. Boyd. "They were married about the same time, and used to joke each other about one having married a Boyd and the other a Floyd.

When Budd was born his mother gave him her surname for his Christian name; and when, a few weeks later, Judd was born, his mother laughingly gave him the Christian name he bears, saying she would make it as near like Budd's as possible.

"We soon separated, I moving into Boston, and Judd's father going West. For a time we kept up a correspondence, but it grew less and less frequent, and finally entirely ceased. But your parents must have returned East, Judd, and I cannot understand why they did not communicate with me, unless your mother's pride was such that she did not wish us to know her husband had become a drunkard."

"I think that is it," said Judd, thoughtfully; "for whenever I asked about her relatives, she never would tell me anything about them."

The newly-discovered relationship was discussed for a time, and facts and dates were brought forward to substantiate it. Then Judd said, with much the same grimace he had used months before:

"I told you some time ago, Budd, that we were second-rate twins, and now it has turned out that we are first-rate cousins!"

CHAPTER XXII.

AN EXCITING ADVENTURE.

"GOOD morning, father! Would you like to go with us to the fish-traps, or will you remain here and rest?"

It was the morning after Mr. Boyd's arrival at the island, and as yet barely six o'clock. Budd had come to the door of his father's room, and finding him awake had thus accosted him.

Mr. Boyd looked up at his boy with a cheerful smile.

"Good morning, Budd!" he responded. "You are around early here, aren't you? Well, I like to see promptness and industry in any one; and as an encouragement, if not an example, to you and Judd, I'll go right along with you. How soon shall I be ready?"

"Breakfast will be on the table in ten minutes, and in course of a half-hour we must be off," answered Budd. "Is there anything I can do for you, father?"

There was manifest affection in the lad's tones as he asked this question, and his face beamed with an irrepressible joy. The great purpose of his heart

had been accomplished; his father was not only at liberty, but with him, and he had nothing more to ask.

"No, my son," replied Mr. Boyd, with no less show of affection; "I'll be with you presently."

Budd went back to the kitchen and assisted Judd in the few preparations necessary to complete the breakfast, and when Mr. Boyd joined the lads a few minutes later all was in readiness for them to sit down to the table; and within the prescribed half-hour the meal had been dispatched and all were on board the Sea Witch.

Her moorings were speedily cast off, and with a strong southeast wind to contend against she tacked down the bay. The first run carried her close under the west shore of the bay, and just before she was put about for her second tack, Budd, who was forward, noticed a large flat-boat coming out from a small cove right ahead of them. A single glance showed him that the one sail of the boat was furled, and that his old employer, Mr. Benton, was pulling her along against the stiff breeze with an enormous pair of sweeps.

"Where did Mr. Benton get that boat, and what is he doing with her, Judd?" he asked.

"All I know about it," replied Judd, eying the clumsy craft, "is that he had her down on Plum Beach, yesterday, loading her with sand. Where he got her I can't say. Perhaps he knocked her together himself; I should judge so, from her build. She won't stand a rough sea long, though; and un-

less he hurries around with his load to-day, she'll go down under him, I'm thinking."

"Are we going to have a storm right away?" asked Mr. Boyd, looking up at the mackerel-sky.

"Yes, sir," replied Judd, promptly. When the wind blows as fresh as this from the southeast, it won't take over six hours to bring a regular gale. That's one reason we have hurried off to the traps so early this morning. I'll agree to show you all the rough weather you'll care to see before we get back to the island;" and the lad spoke with a positiveness that gave a convincing force to all his words.

On account of the strong head-wind the lads had thought it best to first work down along the west shore and visit the two traps on that side of the bay, and then, with the breeze on their starboard, run over to their trap under Canonicut Island. This would give them, also, a stern-breeze for their return home.

In carrying out this plan they ran on their third tack close enough to Mr. Benton to hail him.

"Good-morning, Mr. Benton," Budd cried out. "Shall we take you in tow and leave you at the beach?"

He made the offer, for he had noticed that the old man was making but slow progress against the head-wind. A surly refusal of the offered help was, however, the only answer he received. It was quite evident that Mr. Benton, while he had steadily let the young partners alone since his last encounter with

them, had never forgiven them for the advantage they had then gained.

A few minutes after passing Mr. Benton the first fish-trap was reached, and the lads soon emptied it of its "catch" with all the quickness and dexterity for which they were noted. Mr. Boyd assisted them somewhat, but laughingly declared that "he would have to serve a regular apprenticeship at the business before he could hope to compete with them."

"Oh! you would learn how to do it sooner than you think," remarked Budd, giving the huge net a vigorous pull that sent it slowly back to its place. "I was as great a novice at the work as you are when Judd took me into partnership; but I soon caught the knack, and rather like the business now."

"He proved an apt scholar, and has outstripped his teacher," put in Judd, laughingly. "I sometimes find it hard work to keep up my end with him. But we are ready now, I believe, to work down to the lower trap."

The anchor of the sloop was raised, and her sails adjusted for the brief run around Plum Beach Point to the other fish-pound. As she passed along the sandy shore, on which the huge breakers were rolling with a constantly increasing power, the boys noticed that Mr. Benton had already beached his boat, and had commenced to load her with sand.

"He ought to know better than to put a flat-bottomed boat on there with the wind from this quarter," observed Judd, sagely. "If the wind increases, as I think it will, she'll pound to pieces there in no

time; and even if he's lucky enough to get her off before that happens, he can't get up into his cove with her to-day."

"Why not?" asked Mr. Boyd, with some show of interest.

"Because she has no keel or center-board, and can't hold herself for a moment against the wind. Just as sure as he clears the point with her the wind will drive her straight ahead for our island, or by the west end of it, on to the 'The Hummocks.' See if it don't turn out as I tell you."

"You are right," Budd quietly assented—"unless, as you suggested, before she goes down under him. That sand is heavy, and if he only puts on a half-load, it will sink her well down into the water. A rough sea may flood her, and between the water and the sand she will surely sink. Possibly he will think of this, and be wise enough to leave her where she is, at the risk of her being stove up."

"I don't think so," went on Judd, quickly. "The first board that starts off of her will make him think she is going to pieces right there, and to save her he will try to get her off shore, and that means no chance for the boat, and only half a chance for himself."

"Cannot you run in near enough to warn him of his danger?" asked Mr. Boyd. "Perhaps, if he came right off the beach now, and before the gale comes on, he could save himself and the boat, too."

"Little will he care for our warning," replied Judd; "but then we can give it, all the same. Go

forward, Budd, and shout to him;" and he put up the helm and ran the sloop in as near the beach as he felt it was safe to go.

"Mr. Benton," shouted Budd, "your boat will soon pound to pieces there; and if you delay long about putting off shore there will be great risk about your getting into your cove. The wind is increasing every minute, and will soon blow a gale."

The old man turned slowly around and looked off toward the sloop.

"I'll 'tend to my bizness, if ye'll 'tend to your'n," he curtly replied.

"What did I tell you?" said Judd, as the sloop slowly swung off toward the fish-pound, now no great distance away. "He'll stay there for his load, whatever happens. He don't propose to have either Budd or me give him advice."

Before Mr. Boyd could make any reply there came a sharp cry from Budd, who was still on the bow of the sloop.

"Quick, Judd, or our trap will be destroyed! There is a porpoise in it, and he has already noticed our approach."

"We can't save the net!" exclaimed Judd, springing to his feet, and looking at the huge cetacean that had raised his head above the surface of the water, and within the inclosure of the seine. "He will go through it like a shot! Our only hope is to save the fish!"

"Perhaps I can get him," cried Budd, running aft and drawing the yawl close up to the sloop.

The next moment he had leaped into it, and casting off the painter, he sculled rapidly toward the pound.

As he reached the upper side of the trap, the porpoise made a quick lunge against the opposite side; but the stout netting and firmly-driven stakes withstood its effort to break through. Seeing his opportunity, Budd pulled in his oar and caught up an old harpoon that lay in the bottom of the yawl, and which was kept there to be used upon the sharks that frequently entered the traps.

It was but the work of a moment to fasten the weapon to the bow-line of the yawl, and then Budd threw it with all his strength at the struggling monster. The sharp point struck the porpoise near the center of its back, and penetrated through the thick hide to the depth of several inches.

"Hurrah! I've got him!" shouted Budd, seizing hold of the bow-line and beginning to haul it in.

Scarcely were the words out of his mouth when the rope was jerked from his hand with a force that sent him over backward in the yawl. Then he heard a crash, and a moment after felt the boat moving through the water a terrific rate of speed.

Crawling up onto his knees and grasping hold of the sides of the yawl, he looked about him. The cetacean had cleared itself from the trap and was going down the bay with the boat in tow. Already the sloop was several rods in the rear, and Judd was shouting to Budd to cut the rope that fastened the yawl to the harpoon, so firmly imbedded in the porpoise's back.

Holding on to the yawl with one hand, Budd took his jack-knife from his pocket with the other and opened it with his teeth. He then crept along to the bow of the boat and raised his hand to sever the line. That moment there was a movement on the part of his singular steed that led him to change his mind. The cetacean turned and ran obliquely for the shore, and hoping to yet secure the monster, Budd refrained from cutting the rope.

"Look out for the net, first, then come on and pick me up," he shouted back to Judd. "I'll cut the line at the first show of danger."

The wind evidently carried his words back to his companions with sufficient distinctness to be comprehended, for they at once returned to the pound, beyond which they had already passed in pursuing the fleeing yawl, and Budd was left to continue his wild ride unattended.

To state the exact truth, the lad was immensely enjoying the peculiar situation in which he found himself. As long as the porpoise kept at the surface of the water he knew he was safe, and he watched its movements sharply, so as to cut the bow-line the moment he dived.

But no such movement was to be detected. As though stricken with panic, and bent on suicide, the cetacean fled onward until opposite the huge cliff on the west shore of the bay known as Thurston's Rocks, and then it turned and ran directly inshore.

"It is sure death to go in there," muttered Budd at this movement of his steed, "and I don't propose to go on to that cliff with you."

With knife raised he waited until the porpoise was within a few rods of the shore; then with a quick stroke he severed the rope, and dropping the knife, seized his oars. By a vigorous use of these he staid the impetus of the yawl and turned its bow into the wind. Before he had accomplished this, however, the cetacean had dashed headlong upon the cliff, and now tossed helplessly upon the surface of the water.

For a few minutes Budd held the yawl in check, and watched his huge victim. He did not dare go nearer to the cliff, for he knew the waves were dashing upon it with a force that would crush the boat as though but a cockle-shell, and yet he longed to secure his prey.

He ran his eyes along the rocks. Just beyond the place where the porpoise lay was a shelving ledge, upon which he knew he could get if once on shore, and from the ledge he believed he could reach the rope that was fastened to the cetacean. But where could he land?

Above him, a dozen rods or so, was the old tumbled-down wharf of the long-disused "North Ferry." Rowing slowly up toward this, he was able to bring in the yawl against the north, and hence the sheltered, side.

Securing the boat against any possible escape, he ran quickly down the shore. Once opposite the shelving rock, he with difficulty descended to the water's edge, and regardless of wet feet and wet arms soon caught hold of the rope which the dash-

ing waves brought within his reach. He found also, to his delight, that the rope was long enough to be carried around the trunk of a red cedar that grew out of a crevice in the cliff just above high-water mark.

Having securely fastened the line, Budd stood on the ledge a few minutes, watching the motionless porpoise. The rising tide lifted it upon the ledge quite near him, and the rope slackened somewhat as it was relieved of the cetacean's weight.

"I'll take another half-hitch around the harpoon, and drive that deeper into the porpoise; then he can't get away, and we'll come and get him after the storm is over," Budd thought.

Carrying out his thought, he made the half-hitch about the harpoon with the slackened rope; then he seized hold of the protruding weapon and pressed it down into the motionless body of the cetacean with all his strength.

The next moment the monster, which had apparently only been stunned by its dash upon the cliff, and was now revived by the terrible thrust of the lance into its vitals, gave a sudden and tremendous plunge, which snapped the cord by which it was fastened to the cedar as though it was but tow, and lad and cetacean together rolled off from the rocks into the angry waters.

CHAPTER XXIII.

A MANLY RESCUE.

FORTUNATELY for Budd, he was thrown by the terrible lunge of the porpoise more than ten feet out into the dashing waves, and he had the presence of mind, the moment he rose to the surface of the water, to strike boldly off shore. In this way he soon placed himself beyond any fear of being dashed back upon the rocks.

He could see, also, that the sloop had already left the fish-trap and was bearing down toward him, but was yet a long distance away. He resolved, therefore, to swim up to the old wharf where he had left the yawl.

Burdened as he was with his water-soaked cloth ing, it is doubtful that he could have done this, short as the distance was, had not both wind and tide been in his favor. As it was, he only reached the yawl after a hard struggle, and crawled into it quite out of breath.

When the sloop, from which he had, ever since his sudden and unexpected bath, been watched with anxiety, came in near the wharf, however, he was sufficiently recovered to pull slowly off to her.

"Are you hurt, Budd?" Mr. Boyd asked, anxiously, as he helped the lad on board.

"Oh! no," Budd replied, with a laugh—"a little uncomfortable from my cold bath and tired with my long swim in the rough sea is all; soon as I put on dry clothing I shall be all right."

"How came you to fall off of the cliff?" asked Judd, hardly able to suppress his merriment at the ridiculous figure his chum presented in his dripping clothing. "We were too far off to see just how it happened."

"I'll tell you as soon as I have changed these duds for something more comfortable," replied Budd, good-naturedly, and descending to the cabin, where he knew there were some old clothes kept for just such an emergency as that into which his adventure with the porpoise had brought him.

He was soon, with his father's help, comfortably clad, and back onto the deck of the sloop. With a good deal of *éclat* he then related all the details of his adventure, ending with the wish that he might have secured the cetacean.

"We can get him, for there he is," said Judd.

While Budd had been telling his story, the sloop had been slowly brought down opposite the cliff, and, as Judd had declared, the porpoise was still lying at its base. The thrust that Budd had given it just before his involuntary bath had evidently been a fatal one, for the water all about the cetacean was dyed with blood, and though the monster struggled, it was but feebly.

"How would you get him?" asked Budd, quickly, watching the porpoise in its dying struggles.

"If your father will look out for the sloop I'll get you to set me ashore at the wharf," explained Judd. "I'll take a coil of rope and the boat-hook with me, and I don't believe but what I can in some way fasten a line on to the fellow and throw the other end off here to you, for as soon as you have landed me you will want to row back here with the yawl. After picking up the end of the line you want to carry it on board the sloop, and then return to the wharf for me. Meantime your father can run up along the shore with the sloop, towing the porpoise after her, and when we have got back on board we'll find some way to take the fellow on to the island with us."

"But is he worth all that trouble?" asked Mr. Boyd.

"Oh, yes," both lads quickly answered. "What oil we shall get out of him will more than pay for our trouble and the damage he has done to the fish-trap."

Judd's plan was therefore carried out in every important detail. The lad succeeded in hooking up the piece of rope still remaining on the harpoon, and to this spliced one end of the coil he had carried with him. He then threw the balance of the rope off to his waiting partner, and the work of attaching it to the stern of the sloop was speedily done.

Then, when back on the sloop, Judd skillfully passed a stout rope through the strong jaws of the cetacean, and brought him close up under the stern of the vessel and alongside of the yawl; then, with

both in tow, the Sea Witch rapidly filled away for the opposite side of the bay.

The wind had already increased to such violence that before the passage across was fully made it was found necessary to take a large reef in the mainsail of the sloop; and the waves were rolling so high that, but for the fact that the fish-trap was directly under the lee of Canonicut Island, it could not have been attended to.

Indeed, Mr. Boyd thought it wiser to remain in the sloop while the lads drew and reset the net from the yawl, and when their task was finished, and they had returned to the Sea Witch, he remarked:

"You told me I would see all the rough weather I cared to before our return home, Judd, and I freely confess you were right. I shall be glad when we reach the island."

"That will be in a very short time, now," responded Judd, as he assisted his chum in getting the sloop ready for her home trip. "We shan't have to carry anything but our jib, either."

The speed with which the sloop darted off before the heavy wind warranted his assertion. Their course led them near enough to Plum Beach Point for them to see that Mr. Benton had filled his flat-boat with sand, and was now trying to work the craft off around the point.

He had one of his huge sweeps braced against the side of the boat, and thus pushed it off shore, while he, step by step, worked it along toward the extreme end of the sandy beach. His object was clear. If

he could only get the craft around the point, it was evidently his intention to embark upon it and attempt to run up the bay.

The rapidity with which the Sea Witch was running soon carried her occupants out of sight of the man and brought them near their island home. Fortunately their wharf was at the northwest end of the island, and thus in a measure sheltered from the high sea, if not from the sweep of the wind, and they made their landing in safety.

The sloop was moored in the most sheltered nook the island afforded, the fish, porpoise and yawl were brought on shore, and all was in readiness for the trio to seek the shelter of the house. Bracing themselves against the strong, piercing wind, they started along the path that led to their dwelling, when a sudden call from Judd, who was in the rear, caused his companious to stop.

"Look!" the lad exclaimed; "Benton has actually got his boat around the point, and is now driving helplessly before the gale!"

Budd and his father looked off in the direction that Judd had indicated, and saw that his declaration was only too true. A mile or so away was the flat-boat, sunk nearly to her gunwales in the water, while her one sail flapped loosely in the wind. Mr. Benton was making no attempt to guide the craft, but stood near the swaying mast, clutching it, evidently in sheer desperation. One look told the horrified spectators what had happened. The boat had sprung aleak, and was settling beneath the angry waves.

Mr. Boyd and the lads watched anxiously the boat's progress. A few minutes later it had arrived near enough for them to distinguish Mr. Benton's face, as he clung, pale and terrified, to the slender mast. Certainly he now realized the danger he was in, and knew that he was powerless to avert it.

Three minutes more and the boat would reach the island, for which it was directly coming. Would it keep afloat so long? No! for at that instant a powerful gust of wind swept down upon it, causing it to tremble from stem to stern. For a moment the ill-fated craft seemed to try to shake off the blow, and then, as a tremendous wave dashed over it, it careened, struggled to right itself, then sunk beneath the dashing waves.

Through the heavy rain that now began to fall, the anxious watchers looked for the unfortunate man, and they soon discovered him battling with the angry sea. Another moment and Budd had sprung into the yawl that was moored at the wharf, and before he could be prevented had seized the oars and was pulling off toward the struggling man.

The wind was against him, and the boat was tossed like a bit of cork upon the waves; still he slowly approached the spot where he had last seen his old employer. It was evidently a hard struggle, but with bare head and resolute face the heroic lad pulled on. At length he reached Mr. Benton, and with great difficulty drew him into the little boat.

The wind lulled for an instant, and, laying his exhausted companion down in the yawl, Budd took

advantage of the circumstance and turned the tossing boat for the island.

Half the distance, under his vigorous stroke, was gained, when the wind swept down in greater fury upon him. It is seldom such a gust of wind is experienced in northern latitudes. Trees were overturned, the water was dashed high in the air, and even houses were unroofed by that terrible blast.

When it had passed, Mr. Boyd and Judd arose from the ground to which they had fallen and looked for the yawl. It lay capsized a few rods away, while Budd, with one arm supporting the unconscious form of Mr. Benton, was struggling to reach the shore. But his strength soon failed, and the huge waves rolled within the reach of the waiting man and boy—for both had rushed into the angry waters—two unconscious forms.

As soon as possible, first Budd, and then Mr. Benton, was carried into the house, and with haste their wet clothing was removed, and their cold limbs chafed until the returning warmth told that their sluggish blood was again in circulation, and their lives were spared.

Then a fire was built, blankets warmed, and coffee made. Wrapped up in one, and thoroughly dosed with the other, the man and boy were then put in bed, and were soon quietly sleeping.

It was night when Mr. Benton aroused and found Judd sitting by his bedside.

"How came I here?" he asked.

"Well, I suppose the chief reason you are here,"

replied Judd, bluntly, "is because Budd, at the risk of his own life, went off in the yawl after you;" and he then briefly told the story of the man's rescue.

"Budd is all right, then?" the man asked, with some show of feeling.

"Yes, his father is with him; and when I was in there, a short time ago, he was sleeping nicely," answered Judd, shortly.

Mr. Benton said no more, and after taking the food and warm drink Judd brought him, he soon went to sleep again.

It was morning when he awoke and found his clothes nicely dried by his bedside. Dressing himself, he went out to the kitchen, where he found Mr. Boyd and the two lads. Budd, with the exception of a little paleness, seemed quite like himself.

Mr. Benton made no allusion to his rescue whatever, and the inmates of the house did not speak of it. After breakfast, however, the man turned to Judd and asked if he could be set ashore.

"Not while it storms so," replied Judd, in surprise. "A small boat couldn't live in this sea, and even with the sloop there would be a grave risk. You will have to wait until the storm is over, Mr. Benton."

The man made no reply, but Budd asked:

"Did the yawl come ashore all right?"

"It was stove up a little before I could get out and attend to it," replied Judd; "but we can fix it easily as soon as the weather will permit."

There was no cessation of the storm until night,

and on account of the needful repairs to the yawl, Mr. Benton was obliged to remain on the island until another morning.

During the whole time he in no way mentioned the great risk Budd had undergone in his behalf, but just before his departure on the second morning he remarked:

"I 'spose ye don't hate me no longer, Budd?"

"I have never hated you, Mr. Benton," Budd promptly replied.

"I dunno as ye have," he assented; "ye don't act as though ye did, anyway, an' I'll be friends, if ye will."

Budd shook the hand which was offered him, and without another word Mr. Benton took his departure. Knowing the man as he did, the lad was almost surprised that he should have shown as much feeling as he had; but he was greatly surprised at what soon followed.

Meeting Mr. Wright a few days later, that gentleman accosted him with the question:

"I say, Budd, what have you been doing to Mr. Benton?"

"Nothing bad, I hope," responded the boy, with a laugh.

"I guess not, either," said Mr. Wright; "but I tell you I was taken aback when he came over to my house the other day and actually asked my forgiveness for whatever wrong he had done me, and promised to be a good neighbor from this time forward. Little by little I got the whole story of how

you rescued him, and then I knew the cause of the change in him. I tell you, the day of the impossible hasn't come yet."

And Budd thought so a few days later when he received from Mr. Benton himself a fine gold watch as a token of gratitude for the noble favor he had done him.

On one of the inside cases was Budd's name, and the date of his brave act. The outside cases were plain, with a single exception. The upper lid was engraved with an olive-leaf—emblematic of the peace that was now fully assured between the lad and himself.

"Who would have thought the old miser would have been so generous!" exclaimed Judd, as he looked the watch over.

"Or possessed so much poetic sentiment," added Mr. Boyd, laughingly.

"He must have had some good in him, with all his faults, or he would never have so quickly changed," said Budd, thoughtfully.

A declaration his companions readily accepted.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE FIRM'S PROFITS.

THE STORY now moves forward a few weeks. It is November, and Thanksgiving is close at hand. The fishing season is also nearly over. In fact the business of the young firm has for some time been principally the shipping of oysters to the neighboring towns and cities. Not that they had beds of these delicious bivalves, but had made arrangements with the owner of an extensive plat a a few miles up the bay to market the oysters on shares.

Into all the work of the young partners Mr. Boyd had entered with zest; and under the healthful exercise and invigorating sea-air his usually slender frame grew strong, his muscles toughened perceptibly, and so hearty an appetite was created that he himself laughingly declared he had never eaten so in his life, and he guessed it never would be satisfied.

There was another inmate of the island home now, also. One day Judd had taken a trip up to the State Farm, and when he returned his father came with him, sober and in his right mind. He at first seemed somewhat ashamed to meet Mr. Boyd,

who had known him in the days of his early manhood, and before the accursed habit of drink had become fastened upon him; but his brother-in-law met him so kindly, and seemed so thoroughly interested in his reformation, that he, too, began to take heart, and said:

"If I can only keep away from the sight and smell of the abominable stuff, perhaps I can be a man."

So he remained for the most part upon the island. He was particularly skillful in cutting out oysters, and this soon became his recognized part of the young firm's business.

There had been frequent talks between the inmates of the island home as to what they should do as the winter months came on. Delightful as the place was for the warmer months of the year, it was too bleak for a winter abode. Then, too, there would soon be but little work in which they could engage. But as the weather still remained mild and pleasant, no definite plan was agreed upon; in fact they were all loath to leave a spot that for many reasons had become inexpressibly dear to them.

So the week before Thanksgiving came, and found them still at the island. The work for the day was over, and they had gathered, as was their custom, about the cozy sitting-room fire. The two fathers were reading, while the boys were busy with their accounts.

"There are nearly one hundred dollars out in small bills that we shall have to collect before we

can tell just what our season's work is going to amount to," Budd said in a low tone to his partner.

"Well, you call off the names and amounts, and I will fill out the statements, and we'll send them out at once," Judd responded, drawing a small writing-desk toward him.

For an hour or longer the lads were engaged in this work; but it was at length finished, and the account-books were put away.

"I'll tell you, Judd, what I want to do before we leave here," Budd now said.

"What is it?" his partner asked, with interest.

"Go off for a good long sail; make a day of pleasure of it. For months we have had nothing but business, and I should really like to put a dinner on board the sloop, and fuel, so we can make our tea or coffee, and all of us go off for a day's cruise."

"Where would you go?" inquired Judd, laughingly. "There are very few places around here that you have not visited."

"Oh! go just where we took a notion to go," Budd replied. "The enjoyable part of the trip would be in not having a definite place fixed before we started."

"Well, if to-morrow should prove as pleasant as to-day has been, you couldn't choose a better time for going," went on his chum. "Father and Uncle Henry, what do you think of Budd's idea?"

All four were soon busy discussing the suggestion, and they went to their rooms with the understand-

ing that if the morrow proved a fine day the trip should be undertaken.

The lads were up early, and found the day was promising to be all that they could ask. The preparations were rapidly made, therefore, and at nine o'clock all necessary provisions had been stowed on board the sloop and they were ready to embark.

"Here, Budd; we are to go where you take a notion to go, so you can take the helm," cried out Judd, hurrying to cast off the sloop's fastenings and to hoist her jib and sail.

Budd took the assigned place, and turned the bow of the Sea Witch down the bay. The wind was from the northwest, and they went along at a good rate of speed.

Arriving at the mouth of the bay, Budd turned the sloop to the west and ran in close to the shore, so as to have a good view of the Pier, whose hotels and cottages, closed for the season, made it seem like a deserted city. On they went until Point Judith was reached; then Budd put up the helm and ran directly out to sea.

The north light of Block Island was passed on the left, and along the west shore of that gem of the sea the boat sped. At the southern end the sloop was turned to the east, and it was evident that Budd was going to run around the island. It was now after twelve o'clock, and Judd asked:

"Shall you land for dinner, Budd, or shall I get it ready in the cabin?"

"We are not going to land anywhere until we touch our own dock," said Budd, in high glee. "I came out for a sail, and I'm going to have it. You can get dinner ready when you like."

Judd went into the cabin, built a fire in the tiny stove, and soon the fragrant odor of coffee filled the air. After awhile he announced dinner, and Mr. Boyd and Mr. Floyd went down to partake of it.

Budd, left alone on deck, and, as he afterward said, taken with a freak, put the sloop about again and ran off to sea. Those at dinner thought little of it until they felt the sloop suddenly heave up into the wind and heard Budd call out:

"Here, Judd, quick; I want you."

They all jumped to their feet and rushed out of the cabin. The sloop was miles off the southeast of Block Island, which looked like a mere cloud at the northwest. Her sails flapped idly in the wind, her helm was lashed, and Budd, with the scoop-net in hand, was trying to reach several large bunches of grayish matter that were tossing a few feet away upon the waves.

"What is it?" asked Judd, coming to Budd's assistance, and letting the sloop off a little so she would swing nearer to the object his partner was endeavoring to reach.

"I don't know," answered Budd, catching the largest bunch in his net and drawing it on board, "but I'll soon find out."

But the more he examined the object, the more puzzled he was. While grayish in color at a dis-

tance, on close inspection it proved to be variegated, like marble. It also had a fatty, oily appearance, but was solid to the touch, and when rubbed gave forth a peculiar sweet, earthy odor.

"What do you call it, father?" he at length asked.

"It is evidently a fatty matter of some kind, but I cannot tell its precise nature," Mr. Boyd replied.

Mr. Floyd, however, with a sparkle in his eye, said:

"My opinion is, lad, that you had better get the rest of it, for if I mistake not you have found a treasure."

As he spoke he took from his pocket a knife and cut off a thin slice of the matter, and applied a lighted match to it. It flashed almost like powder, and the sweet odor was strongly noticeable.

"I thought so," he said, "though I never saw any of the stuff but once before, and then only a tiny piece. It's ambergris, and it's worth dollars and dollars a pound."

"I've read about it," said Budd, quickly. "It is a substance that forms in the intestines of the whale, and is occasionally found floating on the sea or thrown upon the shore. They use it in the manufacture of perfumery and cordials; and as Uncle Silas says, it is very valuable. Here, Judd, help me to get the rest of it."

Elated at their discovery, the boys worked the sloop down near the other pieces, and gathered them all up. There were a half dozen in all, the largest being the one that Budd had first secured,

while one or two were comparatively small in size.

"How many pounds do you think there are of it, Uncle Silas?" asked Budd, when all had been secured.

"Nigh on to thirty pounds, I reckon," he said, lifting the pieces one by one.

"It is the biggest haul, then, we have made this season," remarked Judd, with open eyes.

"I rather think so," was Budd's emphatic response.

The ambergris was placed in a tub the lads had on board and taken down into the cabin. Then the sloop resumed her cruise, which was now in the direction of the Brenton Reef lightship. From there she went up through the east passage to Newport, where, contrary to Budd's declaration a few hours before, a landing was made.

In the lad's opinion, circumstances sometimes justified an alteration in one's plans, and he was anxious to ascertain if the substance he had found was really the commercial ambergris it was thought to be. So the stop was made, and with a small piece of the substance in hand he went up to a large drug store, and submitted it to the inspection of the proprietor.

The apothecary, after looking at the substance attentively, went into a back room. He was gone so long that Budd began to get impatient; but he, on returning, explained his long absence in these words:

"I have subjected this to every known test, and

it proves genuine. Have you much of it? And where did you find it?"

Budd gave a full account of his finding the substance, and stated how much he believed he had. Then he ventured to ask its value.

"It is seldom, in these waters, that so much is found," replied the druggist, "though there was a parallel case with yours a few summers ago on the shore of Cape Cod. As to the amount you will receive for it, that depends on the supply on hand at this time, far the larger portion of this material now used in the country being imported. No retail druggist would want to buy a hundredth part of what you have. But I'll tell you what I am willing to do. We, as you may know, have a branch house in New York City. If you are a mind to leave your find with me, I will try and dispose of it for you."

"What would you ask for your trouble?" asked Budd.

"Well," said the man, smilingly, "I think we ought to have five per cent. of the net amount received."

"I'll go down and consult with my partner in the find," said the lad, "and if we decide to accept the offer we will bring it right up here."

"Very well," the druggist replied.

A consultation with Judd and the two fathers was immediately held, and the result was the lads took the ambergris up to the store. On reaching there it was weighed and found to fall a little short of the

lads' expectations, as there were but twenty-six and one-half pounds of it.

"Not a bad find, I assure you," said the proprietor of the store, filling out a receipt for the substance, which he handed to the boys. "In about a week you may expect a check from me, and I will guarantee it will exceed two thousand dollars."

It came within four days, however, and was drawn for the amount of two thousand five hundred and seventeen dollars and fifty cents, the ambergris having sold readily for one hundred dollars a pound; and the druggist, having deducted his five per cent. commission, remitted the balance to the lads.

"Not a bad sum for deposit, chum," remarked Budd complacently, as he looked the check over. "Now, if we can finish collecting our bills, we can draw a balance-sheet on Thanksgiving-day and see what our profits for the season have been."

Though the inmates of the Fox Island house had received an urgent invitation to spend Thanksgiving with Mr. Johnson in Boston they had declined, preferring to spend it at their own home.

When the day came, it found the affairs of the young firm practically closed up for the season. The pound-nets had been taken up, cleaned, and returned to Mr. Taylor, the owner. Crates and cars and traps were stored in an unused room over the kitchen. Bills were collected, and all expenses paid. The balance-sheet of the firm was drawn, and after dinner it was read and discussed with much pride and interest on the part of the young partners.

"Our receipts have been as follows," and Budd read this to his attentive listeners:

From the fish-pounds, ...	$331.27
From fish secured in other ways, . . .	39.74
From clams, lobsters, scallops and oysters, .	195.20
From sailing and fishing-parties, . . .	115.00
From Mr. Benton, as a compensation for taking our boats, ...	25.00
Our part of Clapp & St. John's reward, .	1,000.00
Sale of ambergris, ...	2,517.50
Making a total of	$4,223.71
Our total expenses have been	263.19
Leaving a net balance of	$3,960.52

"This gives to each partner the handsome income of $1,980.26. Hurrah!" and the lad waved high in the air the balance-sheet he had been reading.

"But what pleases me," said Judd, "is that without the unexpected amounts that have come from the reward and the remarkable find, we have had a profitable season. Take the profits of our business alone, and we have the nice sum of four hundred and forty-three dollars and two cents, or over two hundred dollars apiece for the season. That is a better average than I promised you when you came here, Budd."

"Yes, indeed," replied Budd, warmly.

Then he said to his father:

"Of course I have drawn something for personal expenses, and so has Judd; but on looking over our bank account we find we have on deposit nearly

thirty-seven hundred dollars; so Judd has authorized me to say that if you would like to have that amount to go into business with, you are welcome to it. With what you have left of the money Mr. Johnson refunded, you would have a capital larger than a good many men have started with."

"I thank you kindly for the offer," said Mr. Boyd with much feeling, "and in a few days we will see what had better be done. I have enjoyed staying here very much, and have gained a good deal of strength from this life; but I am beginning to feel I ought to be doing something more remunerative, before a great while. You—and Judd, too—however much you like the business you have engaged in, are capable of something better, and ought to be in some good school. Perhaps we can arrange the matter so that a portion of this money can be used for your immediate expenses in this direction, while I, with the balance, enter business life again. I have a feeling I should prefer a small business by myself than to accept a clerkship under another;" and Mr. Boyd dropped his head upon his hand in deep thought.

At about the same hour Mr. Johnson sat in his library in his palatial residence in Boston, thinking no less deeply. After awhile he exclaimed, aloud:

"I will do it!"

Then he took up his pen and wrote a brief note. Placing it in an envelope, he addressed it to Mr. Boyd, and ringing the bell, he gave it to the servant who answered his ring, saying:

"Have John carry that out to the nearest box."

Brief as that note was, it was destined to change, and for the better, the plans that were slowly forming in Mr. Boyd's mind for not only himself but the other dwellers in that island home.

CHAPTER XXV.

MR. JOHNSON'S MUNIFICENCE.

ON THE following Saturday the two lads went over to the village, their principal errand being to secure a boarding-place for themselves and fathers, for it had been decided to leave the island the coming week. Then Mr. Boyd was going on to Boston to see about entering business, and also about putting the boys into some good school. Mr. Floyd had asked that his brother-in-law would so arrange the business that work might be found for him.

"I don't care so much for wages," he had explained, "as to be near you and the lads. I want you all to help me watch myself."

The young partners soon found a boarding-house where they could obtain a parlor and two sleeping-rooms, with board, at what seemed to them a reasonable figure, and promising to give their decision early the next week they left the house. On their way back to the sloop they stepped into the post-office for their mail, and were handed a letter for Mr. Boyd.

"It is from Mr. Johnson," said Budd, as he glanced at the address. "I wonder what he wants of father?"

"Nothing bad, you can be sure," replied Judd.

"The day has gone by for either you or your father to fear anything from that source. I am not sure but the greatest of your triumphs has been to win him for a friend."

"He certainly is a friend now," Budd admitted, his heart going out strongly toward the man he had once counted his enemy; but he little thought what the outcome of that letter was to be.

"I presume we are taking our last sail for months, at least, in our sloop," he remarked, as they took their places in the boat and sailed off down the harbor. "She seems like a near friend to me, and I shall be sorry when we leave her."

"So shall I," assented Judd; "but still I confess I am glad we are going on with our schooling. I had hoped for nothing, however, quite as grand as we probably shall have;" and there was more truth in his words then he himself knew.

They were still discussing the plans they hoped to realize when they reached the island. Mr. Boyd was at the wharf, and immediately opened the letter Budd gave him.

"Hold on!" he a moment later cried out, as Budd was about to take the sloop to her anchorage. "This letter has laid in the office ever since yesterday noon. Mr. Johnson simply says he is coming down to-night to remain over Sunday with us, and wants you to meet him at the six o'clock train. One of you will have to go back to the village after him."

"We will both go," replied Judd; "there is nothing else to do."

So the sloop was put in readiness for the return trip to the village.

Whatever Mr. Johnson's coming meant he in no way disclosed to the lads as they met him at the depot. He greeted them cordially, but seemed anxious to reach the island, and was unusually silent and preoccupied in mind the whole way over.

His meeting of Mr. Boyd at the wharf was warm, almost affectionate, and in a way indicated his purpose in making this visit.

"My dear Henry," he said, grasping Mr. Boyd's hand, "I have found I cannot get along without you, and so have come to make you an important proposal—important to me, at least, if not to you."

Mr. Boyd led the way up to the house, while the lads secured the boat for the night. Supper was on the table, and as soon as the boys came in all sat down to eat it. When it was finished, Mr. Boyd, turning to Mr. Johnson, asked:

"Did you wish to see me alone, sir?"

"No; all of you are more or less interested in what I have to say, and I will wait until the boys have cleared away the table and can join us in the sitting-room."

Curiosity to know just what was coming hastened the lads' movements, and in a very few minutes all were seated about the fire, and Mr. Johnson began:

"Henry, I want to ask, first of all, if you have really forgiven me the part that I innocently played in securing your imprisonment? This boy has," and he laid his hand on Budd's head; "but I have

thought you, who were the greatest sufferer, still held a little resentment against me. Is it not so?"

"I have always thought my years of faithfulness to you ought to have counted for something when I was accused of forgery, but you seemed to jump at once to the conclusion that I must be guilty, and so you would in no way admit that my explanation might be the true one," Mr. Boyd replied.

Then he went on, with marked hesitation:

"I don't think I have felt just right toward you since then—not, perhaps, as I ought to feel. Your mistake may have been a natural one; still you seemed to me to be too hasty in your judgment."

"So I was," admitted Mr. Johnson, frankly; "and the same fault led me to misjudge your boy also. But, Henry, I have learned my lesson well, I believe, and you hold a higher place in my estimation now than ever before, while this boy has my heart."

He paused a moment, visibly affected by his own words, then went rapidly on:

"Henry, I am getting to be an old man, my business is getting larger than I can manage, and since you have been away from me I see how much you were the real head of the whole concern. I have come, therefore, to ask you to show your forgiveness of the wrong I have done you by coming back to me, not as my confidential clerk, but as my equal partner in the new firm of Johnson & Boyd, the whole business to be under your direct management and care. In fact, Henry, the papers are all here ready for your signature. You can look them over and

see if the conditions are satisfactory before you give your answer. But I trust you will find it in your heart to accept my offer."

He took from his pocket a package of papers and handed them over to Mr. Boyd, who took them mechanically, for he seemed completely overwhelmed at Mr. Johnson's magnificent offer.

"Now, my lads," said Mr. Johnson, turning to Budd and Judd, "I have a proposition to make you. I have no children, as you know, and my great house in the city needs some young life. I have watched and admired the industry and uprightness you boys have this summer displayed. But you ought to do something better than the work you have been doing, however honorable that may be. You want first the school and then the college; after that the business or professional life. I invite you, then, to come to my home as my boys, to be educated as my sons, and to be my heirs. Do not think I mean by this a separation from your fathers; we will find a place in the house for them, for there can be found work at the store for Mr. Floyd, and thus you can all be where you can see each other every day. What I want is to have you with me, so that your fresh young lives will enliven mine, and teach me how to soften the hard, stern heart that has twice led me to commit acts I must to my dying day regret;" and now the tears ran down the old man's cheeks unhindered.

This was but the opening of the great plan that had entered Mr. Johnson's heart and mind as he sat

alone in his library on Thanksgiving evening and exclaimed:

"I will do it!"

Little by little he unfolded all his hopes concerning the lads in whom he had become so interested; step by step he made known what he wanted to do for the middle-aged men, one of whom he had so cruelly wronged; until, as they listened, his hearers became bewildered with the man's large-heartedness and munificence.

But Mr. Johnson's purpose was accomplished, for he left the island Monday morning accompanied by Mr. Boyd, and the lads and Mr. Floyd were to follow as soon as the house could be closed up and the household matters adjusted.

This was quite an undertaking, however, since everything was to be disposed of but the Sea Witch, for it was now evident that the young firm of Fox Island had closed up their business for good, and the young partners were to enter upon an altogether different career. Still, the same elements of character—patience, industry, energy and quickness to know and use an opportunity—which had made the firm a success, we may be sure would mark their new career.

That it was these elements that had largely contributed to the lads' success is clearly apparent; for those who succeeded to their business under even more favorable auspices soon abandoned it, and to-day only the tumble-down wharf, the half-filled cellar-way, and the moss-grown well, mark the

place where Budd and his partner had their island home.

But they, grown now to manhood, and busy with the cares of their professional lives, think often of the summer when first they met, and talk over the experiences under which they learned some of their most valuable lessons and triumphed over burdens that seemed too great to bear.

THE BEAR AND THE BOMB SHELL.

DURING the early months of the California gold fever the brig Janet entered the harbor of San Francisco. Her freight was intended to supply the wants of the diggers, and it was the most extraordinary cargo that was ever put into the hold of any seagoing vessel, except, indeed, those vessels which sailed to California at this particular time.

There were pickaxes and shovels, powder and boots, needles and coffee, spikes and tea, horseshoes and tobacco; there were wooden houses ready to be put up; canvas tents and mattresses; there were jackknives, hatchets, revolvers, rifles, socks, books, hats, clothes, barrels of flour, soap, coal, towels, sugar, potatoes, grindstones, locks, quack medicines, old periodicals, cheap watches, buttons, cotton, glass, tape, bottles, jewsharps, nails, rubbers; and everything else that the imaginative mind of a wild speculator could possibly think of as being likely to sell to a young and rich but destitute community.

Whether the speculation was successful or not, is

no business of ours. My business is with Tom Allan, the cabin boy of the Janet.

The Janet took out about fifty passengers on their way to the gold diggings. Allan was a stout lad of about seventeen. When he left home he had no idea of digging gold, but the talk of the passengers on the way out fairly turned the heads of the crew of the Janet, and even of the officers, so that when the brig reached San Francisco, and the passengers landed, the entire crew, together with the cook, the second mate, and even the first mate, landed with them.

The captain was left alone with the cabin boy. The captain was in despair. He couldn't get anybody to unload his vessel. He couldn't get any crew to take her away. And so the end of it was that Allan yielded to the universal feeling and took his departure from the ship.

For about a year he led a queer kind of a life. He worked at various diggings without much success, until at length he got possession of a claim all to himself, in a remote locality, which he proceeded to work at with desperate determination.

He erected a little hut, and made himself as comfortable as possible, and set to work vigorously, and soon found, to his great delight, that the claim was one of unusual richness.

At last, then, after more than a year of adverse fortune, he saw his way to success.

One day he was hard at work. He had found a

rich vein of quartz in which the gold was very plentiful, so much so, indeed, that it was possible for him to extract it by his own clumsy tools without having recourse to a crushing mill.

He had that day been drilling a hole to make ready for a blast, and was working away diligently with his drill. The hole was just finished, when suddenly he was startled by a deep and formidable growl close behind him.

So great was the shock of this unexpected interruption, that the drill dropped from his hands, and he turned around in horror. That horror was increased by the sight that he saw. For there, not a dozen yards away, was a monstrous grizzly bear —one of the largest of his species, crouching low, and regarding him with eyes that gleamed like coals of fire.

One look was enough. The next instant, without stopping to take a second glance, Allan darted off with the mad speed of one who is running for life, while the huge bear came springing after him.

Such a race as that, if prolonged, could have had but one termination; and this Allan knew but too well.

As he ran, therefore, he looked all around to see if there was any chance of escape. But there was none whatever. There was no high cliff up which he might climb—no narrow crevice in the rocks where he might seek shelter.

The country was a barren one, with rocks of dif-

ferent sizes scattered about, here and there. Among these there did not appear anything that offered a hope of escape from the ravening monster that pursued him.

At last, as he looked despairingly around, he saw one thing which offered a faint prospect of escape. It was an enormous granite boulder which arose in the midst of the plain, surrounded by smaller boulders.

This one was about thirty feet high, and its sides were smooth and convex. In front of this grew a slender tree, and Allan thought that if he could climb the tree, he might be able to get upon the boulder and set his enemy at defiance.

There was no time to lose, so he at once acted upon this idea. He rushed to the tree, seizing it with the grasp of despair, and by vigorous exertions climbed to the top.

Here he was on a level with the top of the granite boulder, and was able, by a violent effort, to get upon it. The top of the boulder was flat, and it had been roughened and scarred and worn by the storms of centuries, so that Allan found a firm foothold.

The moment that he reached this place of refuge he turned to look at his enemy.

The grizzly bear was close behind him, and as Allan turned he beheld him grasping the tree and trying to climb. But the tree was too slender for the enormous limbs of the bear. He could not grasp it firmly. As the bear began to perceive this, he

growled wrathfully and ominously, and finally desisted from the attempt.

But he did not desist from his pursuit. On the contrary he drew back a few feet, and sitting on his hind quarters, he regarded Allan with a look of grim and patient watchfulness that was terrible to encounter.

On finding that the bear could not climb the tree, Allan experienced a feeling of relief so great that his fear and despair departed. He accordingly looked down calmly upon his enemy, and expected that in a short time he would give up his pursuit and go away. But the bear did nothing of the kind. As long as Allan looked at him, he looked at Allan, and showed a power of patient watchfulness that was in the highest degree creditable to his bearship, but in the last degree distressing to Allan.

Hours passed, and Allan gave up all ideas of escape for that night. He therefore prepared to pass the night as best he could. After all it was not uncomfortable. The rock was hard, it is true, but Allan's California life had habituated him to hard beds, so that he could sleep even here. And sleep he did. Slumber came over him after sunset, and he slept on as only a California miner can, until some time after sunrise.

On awaking his first thoughts were about his enemy. Slowly and cautiously he raised his head and looked down. That one short glance was enough. For there, in the same place, lay the

grizzly bear, with his head upraised in such a way that his fierce, keen eyes encountered those of Allan as he looked anxiously down. At this sight Allan sank back, and a feeling of utter despair came over him.

He was both hungry and thirsty. His bones also were sore from a sleep on this rough resting place, and the misery of his confinement affected his mind. But what could he do? Again and again the question occurred, What could he do?

In his despair there at last came to him one idea which held out to him a chance of escape. It was a very original idea, and could only have occurred to one like him in his last extremity.

He had no arms, but he had his horn full of blasting powder, and in his pockets he had also his blasting fuse. He had matches also.

Now, though he had no firearms, yet in these he had the material by which firearms gave all their efficiency. Necessity is the mother of invention, and so Allan's dire necessity roused all the inventive faculty of his mind.

It was a plan which could only be tried once. If it failed he was lost; if it succeeded he was saved. He could not wait; so he at once prepared to put his plan in execution.

He took his powder-horn, filled as it was with blasting powder, and in this he inserted a piece of blasting fuse.

It thus became a bomb shell, roughly made, it is true, yet none the less effective for all that. Then

he took off his shirt, and tearing it up into small ribbons, he formed a long line. Fastening this to the horn he lighted the fuse, and then slowly lowered it.

At this extraordinary proceeding, all the well-known curiosity of the bear was aroused. He watched the horn solemnly, as it descended, and then as it came low down, he walked up to it and smelled it.

The smell of the burning fuse was offensive, and he expressed his disgust by a low growl.

At last the horn lay on the ground.

The bear was both puzzled and offended. He put his nose close down to it, and snuffed again and again at the butt of the horn. From above Allan watched with a quick-beating heart.

Suddenly there rang out a tremendous explosion, and a great cloud of smoke rolled up, hiding everything from view. Allan peered cautiously through this, but could see nothing for a long time.

But though nothing met his eyes, his ears were aware of a chaos of sounds—fierce growls of rage and pain—howls, shrieks and yells, all of which proved plainly that very severe damage had been done to somebody.

At last the smoke cleared away, and then Allan saw the bear. From his head, and breast, and fore-paws the hair was all singed off; the skin was blackened to the hue of soot; his fiery eyes gleamed no more; they were tight shut, and with growls of agony the monster rushed frantically about, tossing,

and jumping, and rolling over and over. The explosion had blinded him, and the fierce animal, in his blindness, presented a spectacle that was terrible to witness.

In his wild leaps and tumbles he went about in all directions, not knowing where. His agony had driven from him all thoughts of his late enemy.

Allan now sprang to the tree and quickly descended. He ran to his hut and seized his rifle and revolver. Then he hurried back. The bear was still writhing and rolling about in his blindness. One well directed shot, however, put an end to the monster's sufferings.

Allan did not care about remaining much longer in this place, but soon after he returned to San Francisco, bringing with him a sufficient amount of gold to satisfy his wishes, and with this he brought the skin of the grizzly bear.

AN AFTERNOON AT SAGAMORE POND.

IT WAS about the middle of March. We were fishing up at the Sagamore Pond—Rod Nichols and myself; fishing through the ice for pickerel.

When the country in this part of Maine was first settled, the Sagamore, as well as all the other ponds and lakes, abounded with lake trout, or, as they were then called, *togue* trout—great, broad-backed fellows, weighing from twelve to twenty pounds. But it was foolishly supposed by the early settlers that it would be better to have pickerel instead of trout in these waters. So pickerel were put into nearly every pond and lake in this section. They are the most voracious of fish, very strong and savage, and soon destroyed the trout.

Those of the Sagamore are larger than the pickerel in most of the ponds. It takes a strong line to get them out of the water. Through a hole in the ice this is more easily done; but it is no small job to cut such a hole when the ice is two feet thick. Rod

and I were an hour and a half hacking ours with a hatchet, that afternoon.

It was not far from the shore—eight or ten rods, perhaps—but between us and the bank there was a wide, open place, worn away, or thawed, by a "springhole" along the shore. The afternoon sunbeams, falling on the glass-bright surface, were reflected under the ice, and lighted up the water as far out as where we had made our hole. We could thus see all that was going on under us, though the water was nearly twenty feet deep.

We had fished in this place before, and knew how to take advantage of this clear water, for it's always pleasant to see what one's about. It is fully half the sport to see the fish biting.

After skimming our hole, we dropped in a hook baited with a *shiner*—we had a jug full of them—and waited for a bite; watched and waited patiently and confidently, but it didn't come. Not a fish could be seen in all the clear depths beneath. This was unusual, as well as vexatious, for the Sagamore was known to be well stocked with pickerel, and they generally took the hook readily. But an hour passed without so much as a nibble at our bait.

It was a fine, sunny afternoon. Everything was still. There was not even the cawing of crows to be heard. Presently, looking across to the shore, we saw a large black creature watching us from an old pine stump, that was some four or five rods from the water.

"Fisher-cat, isn't it?" said Rod.

It did look like one, certainly. It was black, and about the same size.

"Suppose he'd show fight if we should go round there?" continued Rod, looking leisurely for the hatchet.

Poor success fishing had made him a little pugnacious, I suppose; and a scrimmage with a fisher-cat, or carcajoe, when you can get one to face about, isn't bad fun for those who enjoy such sport, and are willing to run the risk of getting scratched and bitten.

In explanation, I should say that the "fisher-cat" is a member of the weasel family. Naturalists call it the *Mustela Canadensis*, or Canada weasel; a pretty big weasel, to be sure. Hunters and trappers hate it most heartily, for it will follow them all day on their rounds, taking the bait out of their traps as fast as they can set them.

Well, if we could not catch any pickerel, perhaps a little fracas with Mr. Snarly-face, over there, would be the next best thing; and I was just drawing up my line, when there came a heavy tug at the bait, nearly jerking the line from my hands. There was not only one tug, but a series of tugs and rushes to and fro, making the water fairly boil in the hole.

I had hooked a big one, and he was testing the line to the utmost, and rasping it across the sharp edges of the ice. Holding it steadily, however, the struggle gradually ceased, and looking down

into the water, we saw a noble fellow, slowly waving his fins on the sand, at the bottom of the pond.

"Isn't he a thumper!" exclaimed Rod. "Five or six pounds, certain! Fish enough for one day."

He had become pretty docile, and I had drawn him up within six or seven feet of the surface, when, with a sudden plunge, a long, dark animal darted through the water, and seizing the fish, passed out of sight under the ice, like a black streak. I pulled sharply at the line, once, twice—then it snapped.

Here was a surprise.

"What on earth was that?" cried Rod.

But there was nothing further to be seen. A few bubbles came struggling up through the water, but the creature had gone, and so had the fish.

"It couldn't have been that fisher-cat," said Rod.

"No, indeed! Who ever heard of a fisher-cat, or any other cat, swimming ten rods under water!"

"But he is gone from the stump."

"Well, let him go. That wasn't him."

"What was it, then?"

That was a question easier asked than answered. We were fairly "stuck," as Rod expressed it, and stood staring into the hole. Suddenly there was a wavy motion, deep down, below the surface, and we saw the creature shoot back, by the hole, with the fish in his mouth. We had just a dim, refractive

glimpse, and he had passed, going toward the shore. We looked in that direction, and a few seconds after, saw a flat, black head pop up a moment into sight from the open water, and, then it disappeared. We watched for some minutes, but it did not come up again.

"Rather a strange performance, anyhow," muttered Rod.

"But let's go round to the shore, and see if we can find the fisher."

Going to the shore, we saw that the bank shelved off abruptly into deep water; and in one place it was worn smooth, and was icy, as if some animal had been sliding from it down into the pond. Other than this there were no traces.

So, first cutting a couple of stout clubs, we went to the pine stump, where we had seen what we had taken for a fisher. He was gone; but we discovered a hole in the top of the stump, that went down under the ground, and looking into it saw a broad, black muzzle, and a pair of wicked little eyes gleaming up at us.

"Hollo!" cried Rod, "here he is;" thrusting in his stick. The head vanished.

"But that's no fisher; their noses do not look like that. It was too big and *blunt*. I'll tell you what," exclaimed he suddenly; "it's an otter! That was one out in the pond, too. Did you ever see one?"

"No."

"Nor I; but I've heard old Hughy Clives tell about them; and that's just what this is."

"What about them? Will they fight much?"

"Fight when cornered, Hughy says, like young tigers, too. Dogs are no match for them. But their fur's valuable."

"That's so. We must get this one if we can."

"There may be more than one. They live two and three together, sometimes, Hughy said, in burrows, opening under water. This couldn't be the one that stole our fish, either. It might have been though; for this hole probably leads out into the water, under the bank. Let's see if it doesn't."

We ran to the edge and looked over. The water was six or seven feet deep.

"Stamp on the ground," said I.

Rod did so; and a moment after I saw a long, slim animal glide out from under the bank and dart off beneath the ice—then another.

"Yes, here he is; two of them."

They didn't come up in the open water, but must have gone off under the ice. I suppose there were air-holes through it, where they came up to breathe.

They were otters; no doubt of it. But how to catch them; that was the next question.

"Hughy spoke of setting traps for them," said Rod.

"So we can! Your father's old bear-trap! Set it down under the bank here, where their burrow opens out into the water."

"Agreed."

And home we went after the trap. It was nearly three miles, but we were soon there, and took the trap from the garret, where it had been resting for a dozen years. It was heavy, and must have weighed sixty or seventy pounds. But we hung it on a pole, and resting the ends of the pole on our shoulders, started for the pond; and a fine sweat it gave us before we reached our destination.

The next thing was to set it. The springs were so rusty and stiff that we had to use a lever to bend them, and we came near getting caught in it once or twice; but it was set properly at last, and *sinking* it at the entrance of the burrow we chained it to an old root.

This done, we filled in stones, and stopped the hole in the stump at the upper end of the den, to prevent the otters from getting out there. Then we went home, for it was considerably after sunset. We had our trap on their doorstep, as Rod said; they could neither go in nor out without climbing over it.

The next afternoon we went to see what success attended our efforts. There was nothing stirring about the stump, and creeping cautiously down the bank, we looked over. The trap had been sprung and drawn up into the burrow, partly out of sight. Pulling it out by the chain, sure enough, there was a long, sleek, black fellow in it fast by one of his chubby legs. But he was quite dead—drowned.

The great weight of the trap had prevented his coming to the surface. And although an otter

can remain under water for nearly two minutes, yet at the end of that time he must come to the surface, like any air-breathing animal, or be suffocated.

We were jubilant. Taking him out, we carefully replaced the trap in its old position and went home with our game, where, calling in the assistance and advice of old Hughy, we proceeded to take off the skin according to standard rules.

The fur was of a light brown color, thickly interspersed with black hairs, which gives the animal at a little distance the appearance of being wholly black. The ears were small and far apart, and the feet short and webbed like a goose. The entire length of the animal, including its tail, was nearly five feet; but Hughy thought this one rather above the average size.

The next day we caught another otter—a smaller one; and about a fortnight after, a third met his fate in the jaws of the old trap.

We received twelve dollars apiece for these skins, and felt very well satisfied with our afternoon's sport at the Sagamore.

HOW JACK WENT TIGER-HUNTING.

JACK was reading Du Chaillu. He spent a good deal more time that night over Du Chaillu than over his Latin.

His mother and Bessy were seated by the fire, and presently he came over and turned his back to the grate, putting his hands behind him, with a swaggering way he had.

"I've got an idea, mother!" he said.

"I'm glad of that," said Bessy, under her breath. Mrs. Leigh shook her head at her.

"Well, my son?"

"Du Chaillu's in this country, you know?" Jack's face was red, and his voice like a trumpet, from excitement.

"I believe he is."

"Oh, I know it, ma'am! I saw in the paper he was lecturing in New York. And he's going back to Africa next fall. And I—I've made up my mind to go with him!"

Bessy stared.

"To Africa?" said Mrs. Leigh, folding her hem.

"Yes, mother." Jack was a little damped to find his views received so quietly.

"That is, with your permission. But you see all through this book he is inviting the boys to go. He was but a lad when he killed his first lion. He says nothing would delight him more than to take some fine courageous fellow into the jungle, and teach him how to trap elephants and hunt tigers. Oh, if I could wing a tiger with my gun!"

"Will you thread my needle, Bessy? I think if you wait, you will be a better shot in a year or two, probably, Jack."

"You think I couldn't stand it," blustered Jack. "Why, I've got muscles on me like iron. I tell you, nothing would please me better than footing it through the jungle for months, eating leopard and monkey steaks, and fighting gorillas. Those negroes were poor stuff for hunters, I think! Used to give out in a week or two. So did Du Chaillu. Why, I could go on for months, and never complain."

"Who was that whining over his grammar, awhile ago?" asked his sister.

"That's a very different matter," stammered Jack angrily. "What kind of sense is there in *amaba—bis—bus!* That's stuff! If I had a chance with my gun now, at a lion, say——"

"If you cannot conquer nouns and verbs, Jack," said Mrs. Leigh, "I am not afraid for the wild beasts."

"As for Bess, she needn't laugh," growled Jack.

"What does a girl know, with her curls, and paniers, and folderols? She never even read Du Chaillu;" and he stamped into the dining-room and began to kick off his boots.

"You should not tease your brother, Bessy."

Bessy laughed. She was a fat, pretty, good-tempered girl, very fond of Jack and just as fond of squabbling with him.

"He is such a fellow to brag, mamma. Now I know he'll be at it again. There he comes."

Jack came in and leaned with his elbows on the table, watching his mother and thinking.

"Now Du Chaillu and those fellows," he broke out, "had a way of skulking behind trees and shooting at animals from ambush. I don't approve of that. I would not do that. The way to meet a wild beast is to fix your eye on him boldly. Look him straight in the eye. What are you laughing at, Bess? I tell you scientific men say there's nothing like the power of the human eye. Then when I had him fixed, I'd take aim deliberately and fire. I'd have him at an advantage, you see. Mother, there's a fire! I hear the bells!"

"Yes."

"Can I go? Just to see where it is? Only to the corner? I won't go a step beyond the corner, I promise you."

"Very well, Jack, I trust you."

Jack's word, when he gave it, was as good as his oath, and although the street was quite dark, yet as they lived in a quiet part of the city his mother saw him go without fear.

There was a good deal of noise and confusion outside. An engine ran past and men shouting; but in half an hour Mrs. Leigh and Bessy heard Jack coming leisurely up the steps, whistling and talking.

"Here, sir! Wheet! wheet! This way. In with you. Gracious, mother, how dark this hall is! Why don't Ann? Wheet—wheet! There!" opening the back door, "stay there till morning." He shut and locked the door again and came into the parlor.

"'Twasn't much of a fire—near two miles off—somewhere about the Northern mills."

"There was great confusion," said Mrs. Leigh.

"There always is. Now if I was the captain of a fire company, I'd manage differently. I'd say to this man, go here, and to that man, go there, and they should not dare to utter a word. Then the fires would be put out."

"Who was that in the hall, Jack?" inquired Bessy.

"A big dog; a most tremendous fellow. He came running alongside of me on the street, and turned up the steps as I did. Somebody's lost him, I suppose. I put him in the yard till daylight, and then I can see him and look up his owner."

"Was he a pretty dog?" said Bess eagerly.

"How could I tell? I told you I didn't see him. As he brushed by me, I felt that he was a strapping fellow. The hall's as dark as pitch."

"You didn't fix him with your eye, then?"

Jack said nothing, but lighted his candle and went to bed.

The next morning he was awakened by a thumping at the door, and in rushed Bessy, wild with excitement, the morning newspaper in her hand.

"O, Jack, listen to this!" jumping on the bed and beginning to read breathlessly:

"ESCAPE OF WILD ANIMALS.—The fire of last night communicated with the stables where the animals connected with Drivers' Menagerie were stored for the winter, and several of them escaped. They were promptly pursued and captured, with the exception of the Bengal tiger, that was last seen making its way toward the southern part of the city. At the hour of our going to press no traces have been found of the animal."

Bessy laid down the paper. Her eyes were set deeper in her head than usual, and they burned like coals. "Jack!" she gasped, "what do you think?"

Jack's face, and neck, and very ears were scarlet. He stammered, and did not seem nearly so tumultuous as usual.

"I think it's in our back yard," he said, at last. "I wish you'd get out of this, Bessy. I'll—I'll get up and call a policeman."

"A policeman! What on earth can he do with a tiger?" cried Bessy, in discomfiture. "Why, I thought for sure, Jack, you'd fix him with your eye; or wing him. Sha'n't I bring you your gun to wing him?"

"Perhaps I will," said Jack loftily. "But I must be dressed first."

Bessy went out, but stood just outside of the door, trembling and quaking, her hand on the knob. Her mother had gone out early. Usually she had very little dependence on Jack, or his bravery, but anything in the shape of man or boy is a comfort to a frightened woman, and all of Jack's boasting came back soothingly now to Bessy. In half a minute Jack had scrambled into his clothes and was out.

"Have you seen it?" Where is it?"

"It's in the coal-shed; in the darkest end. Ann's got the back doors tight locked and bolted, and she's up in bed with the pillow over her head. There's your gun, Jack."

Jack took the gun, and still in his stocking feet, went on tiptoe to reconnoiter. From the second-story window he saw that the yard was quite clear. Just by the house stood the coal-shed, dingy and dirty enough at ordinary times, but now covered with the mystery and horror of an African jungle.

"You think it's in there, do you?" he said, under his breath.

"Oh, Ann heard it! Such a horrible roar! Up in the very back part. How will you get at it to shoot it?"

"I'll call in the police as soon as I'm sure it's the tiger. If it was in the jungle I'd face it. But

such animals are always doubly furious for being confined."

"There's a knot hole in the shed. You can peep, Jack. He won't see you."

But Jack was growing unaccountably pale, and his teeth were chattering. "I'd—I'd rather not open the door—on your account, Bess. He might run in."

"Fire your gun and he'll dash out into the yard!" cried Bess, not knowing whether to laugh or cry, in her excitement. "Good gracious! what will the girls say at school when they hear we've had a real tiger in our shed. If you'd only shoot him, and we'd have him stuffed."

"I mean to shoot when he comes out."

But Jack's fingers shook so as he adjusted the trigger that one would have thought he had the palsy.

"I'll tell you what to do!" shouted Bessy, clapping her hands. "I'll go down to the kitchen window, and throw a bone out in front of the shed-door, and when he rushes out for it, you look if it's the tiger or not."

"Very well."

"Unless you'd rather throw the bone," hesitated Bessy, her heart giving way.

"There's not the least danger for you, Bessy. And I'm a better judge of tigers. I'm more familiar with their habits than you."

Off went Bessy, and finding a half-eaten roast of beef in the pantry, she opened the kitchen window,

her heart choking her as she did it, and flung it out with all her strength. There was a rush from the shed, but Bessy had closed the shutters and was flying up the stairs. Halfway up stood Jack, pale and breathless.

"Was it the tiger?"

"Yes."

"Oh, Jack!" Bessy clasped her hands. "Is he—is he big?"

"Oh, he's a monster. His eyes are like coals of fire." Jack jerked out the words as he dashed down the stairs and out of the front door, shouting, "Police! police!"

One can easily guess what followed then. When Mrs. Leigh came home from market, a dense crowd packed the street for half a square from her house, on the outskirts of which skirmished women, with babies in their arms, boys open-mouthed, and cartmen cracking their whips, whose horses stood waiting in a crowd at the corner. In front of the door stood one of the vans of the menagerie. Wild cries of "The tiger!" "The lion!" resounded from side to side, and every time the door opened the crowd fell back, expecting him to charge on them. Way was made for Mrs. Leigh. Everybody looked at her with respect.

"He's in your house, ma'am."

"It was your son that discovered him."

Mrs. Leigh hurried in, terrified at the thought of what might have befallen her children. The house

was filled with men. Policemen were in full force to keep order. The keepers from the menagerie had a net suspended over the door of the shed, to catch the tiger when it should rush out. Half a dozen men stood with guns ready pointed, in case he should attack them.

"But don't fire, unless in case of absolute necessity," pleaded the keeper. "Consider the cost, gentlemen. That beast is worth, as he stands, two thousand dollars."

"What's your two thousand dollars to us?" growled one of the men, cocking his gun. "Consider our lives."

Nobody as yet had seen the tiger but Jack, who stood in an upper window, the observed of all observers.

The keepers went on with their preparations. It was their plan to shoot into the shed, over the tiger's head, and when he charged on them, capture him in the net.

"Let every man take care of himself," said the keeper. "Fire if we do not secure him. Are you ready, men?"

The men, with pale faces, lowered the net. "All right!"

"Look out, then. One, two, three!"

"Bang!" went the pistol over the beast's head. There was a moment's pause, and then a fierce dash and a shriek from the people, caught up and echoed by the crowd outside. The men tugged at their net and caught—

"Brown's big yellow dog!" shouted the policemen.

"Where's that young coward that fooled us?" The keepers raged and the crowd cheered.

But Jack had hidden away with his shame and could not be found. He never was known to brag again.

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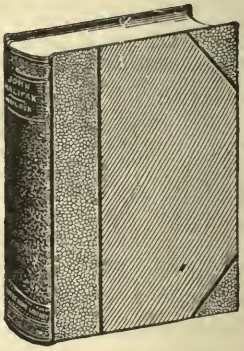

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